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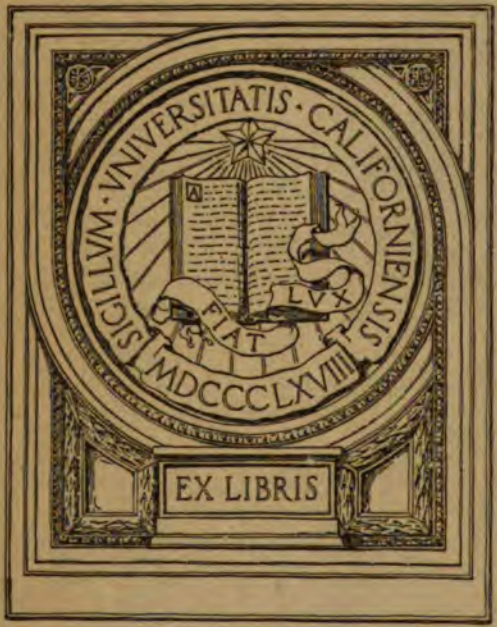

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VOLUME VIII

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How delightful a picture, even if it be not true! How magnificent is the conception which this bold theory suggests to the contemplation, even if it be no more than the imagination of some sublimest and most holy poet, who, impressed with the loveliness and majesty of his own nature, is impatient and discontented with the narrow limits which his imperfect life and the dark grave have assigned for ever as his melancholy portion.

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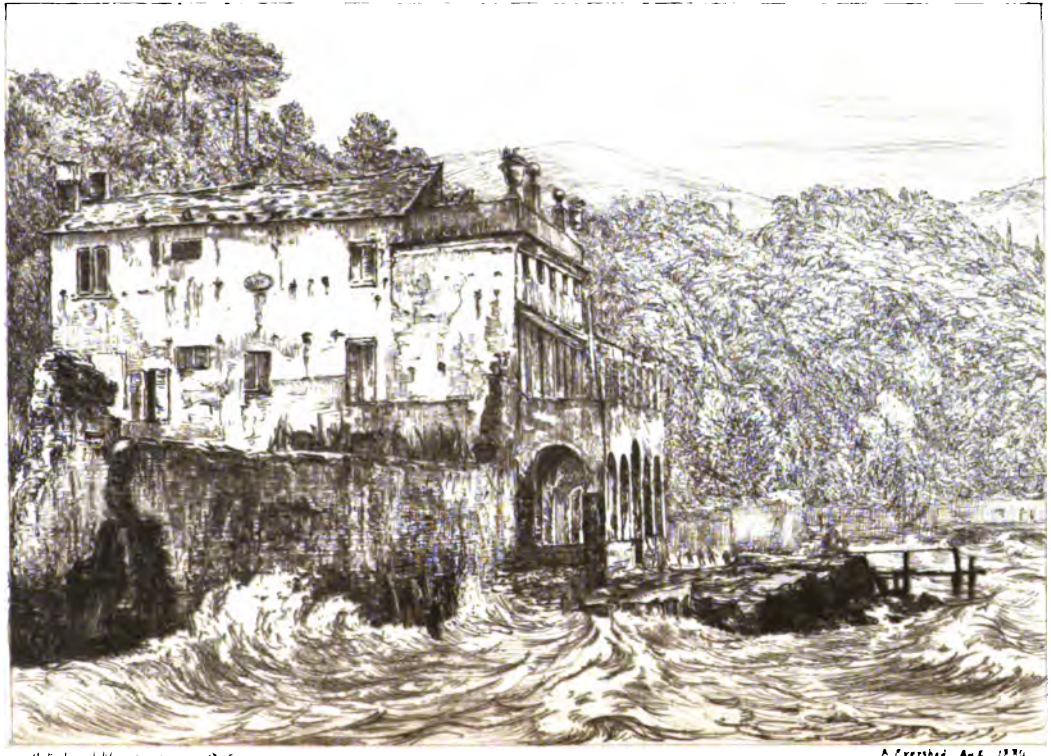

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CORRECTIONS.

VOL. II.

Page 160, line 6 from foot.—Insert a comma after *found*.

Page 402, line 12.—Insert catch-figure "1" at end of line; and insert as a foot-note,—

"[1] Byron's *Manfred*, Act I, Sc. 1."

VOL. III.

Page 272, line 6 of left-hand note.—Before Αὐτός insert *Ion*.

VOL. IV.

Page 12, line 2 from foot of left-hand note.—Strike out *perhaps*. Since writing the note I have come upon Peacock's statement (*Fraser's Magazine*, June, 1858, page 658): "I remember his absorbed attention to Miss O'Neill's performance of Bianca in *Fazio*, and it is evident to me that she was always in his thoughts when he drew the character of Beatrice in the *Cenci*."

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LETTERS FROM ITALY.

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[In the second volume of the *Essays, Letters* &c., 1840, Mrs. Shelley published sixty-seven of these letters from abroad; and one (to Severn) was added in subsequent editions. The name of Thomas Love Peacock, the recipient of some which are among the most important of the series, was on that occasion withheld, though the initials were given. There is a remark in Mrs. Shelley's Preface (page xxi) that "the reader can only regret that they are so few, and that one or two are missing." Twenty years later, Peacock managed to find seventeen more of them, which were published by him, considerably edited, in *Fraser's Magazine* for March, 1860. Most of the original letters are still extant. In an edition of Shelley's Prose Works it is perhaps not necessary to restore to these letters the full measure of their biographical as distinct from their literary character; but wherever I have had the opportunity to supply some omission not now needed, or to restore the correct readings, I have done so. Several letters are added from other outlying sources, such as Moore's *Life of Byron*, the *Relics of Shelley*, &c.; and some are given from the original manuscripts,—as far as I know, for the first time. The whole enlarged series of "Letters from Italy" is, of course, arranged chronologically, as the original series was.—H. B. F.]

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LETTERS FROM ITALY.

LETTER I.

To LEIGH HUNT.[1]

Lyons, March 22, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Why did you not wake me that night before we left England, you and Marianne? I take this as rather an unkind piece of kindness in you; but which, in consideration of the six hundred miles between us, I forgive.

We have journeyed towards the spring that has been hastening to meet us from the south; and though our weather was at first abominable, we have now warm sunny days, and soft winds, and a sky of deep azure, the most serene I ever saw. The heat in this city to-day, is

[1] In *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, Leigh Hunt published this and the seven other letters of Shelley's to him, which appeared in Mrs. Shelley's collection, and are here reprinted. I have collated them, as printed by Mrs. Shelley, with the second edition of Hunt's book (2 vols., 1828), and noted such variations as seemed worth recording. When a variation or addition is simply given as a foot-note in italics, it is to be understood that it is from Hunt's version.

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like that of London in the midst of summer. My spirits and health sympathize in the change. Indeed, before I left London, my spirits were as feeble as my health, and I had demands on them which I found it difficult to supply. I have read Foliage, with most of the poems I am[1] already familiar. What a delightful poem the "Nymphs" is! especially the second part.[2] It is truly *poetical*, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word. If six hundred miles were not between us, I should say what pity that *glib*[3] was not omitted, and that the poem is not as faultless as it is beautiful. But, for fear I should *spoil* your next poem, I will not let slip a word upon[4] the subject.

Give my love to Marianne and her sister, and tell Marianne she defrauded me of a kiss by not waking me when she went away, and that, as I have no better mode of conveying it, I must take the best, and ask you to pay the debt. When shall I see you again? Oh, that it might be in Italy! I confess that the thought of how long we may be divided makes me very melancholy. Adieu, my dear friends. Write soon.

Ever most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

[1] *was.*

[2] Mrs. Shelley omits *especially the second part.*

[3] *The Nymphs* is the first poem in the collection then just published by Hunt under the title of *Foliage; or Poems Original and Translated* (London, C. & J. Ollier, 1818). The word *glib* occurs in a passage at the end of Part I, treating of the Nereids, and how they

> colour, like their own,
> The parted lips of shells that are up thrown,
> With which, and coral, and the glib sea flowers,
> They furnish their faint bowers.

Shelley seems to have taken exception to Hunt's use of *glib* in its primitive sense of *smooth, slippery.* Part II made a deep impression on him; for the song of the Nepheliads at the close of it must certainly be counted among the causes that led to the composition of *The Cloud.*

[4] *on.*

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JOURNAL: PASSAGE OF LES ECHELLES.[1]

[*March* 26, 1818.]

MARCH 26, Thursday. We travel towards the mountains, and begin to enter the valleys of the Alps. The country becomes covered again with verdure and cultivation, and white chateaux and scattered cottages among woods of old oak and walnut trees. The vines are here peculiarly picturesque; they are trellised upon immense stakes, and the trunks of them are moss-covered and hoary with age. Unlike the French vines, which creep lowly on the ground, they form rows of interlaced bowers, which, when the leaves are green and the red grapes are hanging among those hoary branches, will afford a delightful shadow to those who sit upon the moss underneath. The vines are sometimes planted in the open fields, and sometimes among lofty orchards of apple and pear-trees, the twigs of which were just becoming purple with the bursting blossoms.

We dined at Les Echelles, a village at the foot of the mountain of the same name, the boundaries of France and Savoy. Before this we had been stopped at Pont Bon-

[1] Mrs. Shelley prints this fragment as a foot-note to the foregoing letter recording that, in a journal of her own, she found "a few pages in Shelley's handwriting, descriptive of the passage over the mountains of Les Echelles."

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voisin, where the legal limits of the French and Sardinian territories are placed. We here heard that a Milanese had been sent back all the way to Lyons, because his passport was unauthorized by the Sardinian Consul, a few days before, and that we should be subjected to the same treatment. We, in respect to the character of our nation I suppose, were suffered to pass. Our books, however, were, after a long discussion, sent to Chambery, to be submitted to the censor; a priest, who admits nothing of Rousseau, Voltaire, &c., into the dominions of the King of Sardinia. All such books are burned.

After dinner we ascended Les Echelles, winding along a road, cut through perpendicular rocks, of immense elevation, by Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, in 1582. The rocks, which cannot be less than a thousand feet in perpendicular height, sometimes overhang the road on each side, and almost shut out the sky. The scene is like that described in the Prometheus of Æschylus. Vast rifts and caverns in the granite precipices, wintry mountains with ice and snow above; the loud sounds of unseen waters within the caverns, and walls of toppling rocks, only to be scaled as he describes, by the winged chariot of the ocean nymphs.

Under the dominion of this tyranny, the inhabitants of the fertile valleys, bounded by these mountains, are in a state of most frightful poverty and disease. At the foot of this ascent, were cut into the rocks at[1] several places, stories of the misery of the inhabitants, to move the compassion of the traveller. One old man, lame and blind, crawled out of a hole in the rock, wet with the perpetual melting of the snows above, and dripping like a shower-bath.

[1] So in the first edition; but *in* for *at* in the later editions.

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The country, as we descended to Chambery, continued as beautiful; though marked with somewhat of a softer character than before; we arrived a little after night-fall.

LETTER II.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Milan, April, 1818.

My dear Peacock,

Behold us arrived at length[1] at the end of our journey—that is, within a few miles of it—because we design to spend the summer on the shore of the Lake of Como. Our journey was somewhat painful from the cold—and in no other manner interesting until we passed the Alps: of course I except the Alps themselves; but no sooner had we arrived at Italy, than the loveliness of the earth and the serenity of the sky made the greatest difference in my sensations. I depend on these things for life; for in the smoke of cities, and the tumult of human kind, and the chilling fogs and rain of our own country, I can hardly be said to live. With what delight did I hear the woman, who conducted us to see the triumphal arch of Augustus at Susa, speak the clear and complete language of Italy, though half unintelligible to me, after that nasal and abbreviated cacophony of the French! A ruined arch of magnificent proportions, in the Greek taste, standing in a kind of road of green lawn overgrown with violets and primroses, and in the midst

[1] The words *at length* are in the first edition, but are omitted from the later editions.

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of stupendous mountains, and a *blonde* woman, of light and graceful manners, something in the style of Fuseli's Eve, were the first things we met in Italy.

This city is very agreeable. We went to the opera last night—which is a most splendid exhibition. The opera itself was not a favourite, and the singers very inferior to our own. But the ballet, or rather a kind of melodrame or pantomimic drama, was the most splendid spectacle I ever saw. We have no Miss Melanie here—in every other respect, Milan is unquestionably superior. The manner in which language is translated into gesture, the complete and full effect of the whole as illustrating the history in question, the unaffected self-possession of each of the actors, even to the children, made this choral drama more impressive than I could have conceived possible. The story is *Othello*, and strange to say, it left no disagreeable impression.

I write, but I am not in the humour to write, and you must expect longer, if not more entertaining, letters soon —that is, in a week or so—when I am a little recovered from my journey. Pray tell us all the news with regard to our own offspring, whom we left at nurse in England; as well as those of our friends. Mention Cobbett and politics too—and Hunt—to whom Mary is now writing —and particularly your own plans and yourself. You shall hear more of me and my plans soon. My health is improved already—and my spirits something—and I have many literary schemes, and one in particular—which I thirst to be settled that I may begin. I have ordered Ollier to send you some sheets &c. for revision.

Adieu.—Always faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

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LETTER III.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Milan, April 20, 1818.

My dear Peacock,

I had no conception that the distance between us, measured by time in respect of letters, was so great. I have but just received yours dated the 2d—and when you will receive mine written from this city somewhat later than the same date, I cannot know. I am sorry to hear that you have been obliged to remain at Marlow; a certain degree of society being almost a necessity of life, particularly as we are not to see you this summer in Italy. But this, I suppose, must be as it is. I often revisit Marlow in thought. The curse of this life is that whatever is once known, can never be unknown, You inhabit a spot, which before you inhabit it, is as indifferent to you as any other spot upon earth, and when. persuaded by some necessity, you think to leave it, you leave it not; it clings to you—and with memories of things, which, in your experience of them, gave no such promise, revenges your desertion. Time flows on, places are changed; friends who were with us, are no longer with us; yet what has been seems yet to be, but barren and stripped of life. See, I have sent you a study for Nightmare Abbey.

Since I last wrote to you we have been to Como, looking for a house. This lake exceeds any thing I ever beheld in beauty, with the exception of the arbutus

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islands of Killarney. It is long and narrow, and has the appearance of a mighty river winding among the mountains and the forests. We sailed from the town of Como to a tract of country called the Tremezina, and saw the various aspects presented by that part of the lake. The mountains between Como and that village, or rather cluster of villages, are covered on high with chesnut forests (the eating chesnuts, on which the inhabitants of the country subsist in time of scarcity), which sometimes descend to the very verge of the lake, overhanging it with their hoary branches. But usually the immediate border of this shore is composed of laurel-trees, and bay, and myrtle, and wild fig-trees, and olives, which grow in the crevices of the rocks, and overhang the caverns, and shadow the deep glens, which are filled with the flashing light of the waterfalls. Other flowering shrubs, which I cannot name, grow there also. On high, the towers of village churches are seen white among the dark forests. Beyond, on the opposite shore, which faces the south, the mountains descend less precipitously to the lake, and although they are much higher, and some covered with perpetual snow, there intervenes between them and the lake a range of lower hills, which have glens and rifts opening to the other, such as I should fancy the *abysses* of Ida or Parnassus. Here are plantations of olive, and orange, and lemon-trees, which are now so loaded with fruit, that there is more fruit than leaves,—and vineyards. This shore of the lake is one continued village, and the Milanese nobility have their villas here. The union of culture and the untameable profusion and loveliness of nature is here so close, that the line where they are divided can hardly be discovered. But the finest scenery is that of the Villa Pliniana; so called from a

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fountain which ebbs and flows every three hours, described by the younger Pliny, which is in the court-yard. This house, which was once a magnificent palace, and is now half in ruins, we are endeavouring to procure. It is built upon terraces *raised from* the bottom of the lake, together with its garden, at the foot of a semicircular precipice, overshadowed by profound forests of chesnut. The scene from the colonnade is the most extraordinary, at once, and the most lovely that eye ever beheld. On one side is the mountain, and immediately over you are clusters of cypress-trees of an astonishing height, which seem to pierce the sky. Above you, from among the clouds, as it were, descends a waterfall of immense size, broken by the woody rocks into a thousand channels to the lake. On the other side is seen the blue extent of the lake and the mountains, speckled with sails and spires. The apartments of the Pliniana are immensely large, but ill furnished and antique. The terraces, which overlook the lake, and conduct under the shade of such immense laurel-trees as deserve the epithet of Pythian, are most delightful. We staid at Como two days, and have now returned to Milan, waiting the issue of our negotiation about a house. Como is only six leagues from Milan, and its mountains are seen from the cathedral.

This cathedral is a most astonishing work of art. It is built of white marble, and cut into pinnacles of immense height, and the utmost delicacy of workmanship, and loaded with sculpture. The effect of it, piercing the solid blue with those groups of dazzling spires, relieved by the serene depth of this Italian heaven, or by moonlight when the stars seem gathered among those clustered shapes, is beyond any thing I had imagined architecture capable of producing. The interior, though very sublime,

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is of a more earthly character, and with[1] its stained glass and massy granite columns overloaded with antique figures, and the silver lamps, that burn forever under the canopy of black cloth beside the brazen altar and the marble fretwork of the dome, give it the aspect of some gorgeous sepulchre. There is one solitary spot among those aisles, behind the altar, where the light of day is dim and yellow under the storied window, which I have chosen to visit, and read Dante there.

I have devoted[2] this summer, and indeed the next year, to the composition of a tragedy on the subject of Tasso's madness, which I find upon inspection is, if properly treated, admirably dramatic and poetical. But, you will say, I have no dramatic talent; very true, in a certain sense; but I have taken the resolution to see what kind of a tragedy a person without dramatic talent could write. It shall be better morality than Fazio,[3] and better poetry than Bertram,[4] at least. You tell me nothing of Rhododaphne,[5] a book from which, I confess, I expected extraordinary success.

Who lives in my house at Marlow now, or what is to be done with it? I am seriously persuaded that the situation was injurious to my health, or I should be

[1] In the first and second editions we read *and with its* &c.; in the edition of 1852, *with* is omitted.

[2] We are of course to read the phrase *I have devoted* in the sense of a determination as to the future. The only relics of this scheme which we possess are the *Scene from Tasso* and the *Song for Tasso*.

[3] Dean Milman's Tragedy *Fazio* had been produced in 1815 at Covent Garden, having previously been acted at the Surrey Theatre under the title of *The Italian Wife*. It was perhaps a recollection of having seen Miss O'Neill in the part of Bianca that made Shelley shrink from the idea of witnessing a performance he so much desired, —an impersonation by her of Beatrice in his own still unacted Tragedy, *The Cenci*.

[4] Maturin's Tragedy *Bertram* had been produced at Drury Lane in 1816. Sir Walter Scott considered the work "grand and powerful," and the language "most animated and poetical."

[5] Shelley's review of Peacock's *Rhododaphne* will be found in Vol. III of this edition.

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tempted to feel a very absurd interest in who is to be its next possessor. The expense of our journey here has been very considerable—but we are now living at the hotel here, in a kind of pension, which is very reasonable in respect of price, and when we get into a menage of our own, we have every reason to expect that we shall experience something of the boasted cheapness of Italy. The finest bread, made of a sifted flour, the whitest and the best I ever tasted, is only *one English penny* a pound. All the necessaries of life bear a proportional relation to this. But then the luxuries, tea, &c., are very dear,—and the English, as usual, are cheated in a way that is quite ridiculous, if they have not their wits about them. We do not know a single human being, and the opera, until last night, has been always the same. Lord Byron, we hear, has taken a house for three years, at Venice; whether we shall see him or not, I do not know. The number of English who pass through this town is very great. They ought to be in their own country in the present crisis. Their conduct is wholly inexcusable. The people here, though inoffensive enough, seem both in body and soul a miserable race. The men are hardly men; they look like a tribe of stupid and shrivelled slaves, and I do not think that I have seen a gleam of intelligence in the countenance of man since I passed the Alps. The women in enslaved countries are always better than the men; but they have tight-laced figures, and figures and mien which express (O how unlike the French!) a mixture of the coquette and prude, which reminds me of the worst characteristics of the English.[1] Everything

[1] Mrs. Shelley says that "these impressions of Shelley, with regard to the Italians, formed in ignorance, and with precipitation, became altogether altered after a longer stay in Italy." Perhaps his removal from Lombardy to Tuscany had something to do with the change of view.

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but humanity is in much greater perfection here than in France. The cleanliness and comfort of the inns is something quite English. The country is beautifully cultivated; and altogether, if you can, as one ought always to do, find your happiness in yourself, it is a most delightful and commodious place to live in.

Adieu.—Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

LETTER IV.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Milan, April 30th, 1818.

My dear Peacock,

I write, simply to tell you, to direct your next letters, Poste Restante, Pisa. We have engaged a vetturino for that city, and leave Milan to-morrow morning. Our journey will occupy six or seven days.

Pisa is not six miles from the Mediterranean, with which it communicates by the river Arno. We shall pass by Piacenza, Parma, Bologna, the Apennines, and Florence, and I will endeavour to tell you something of these celebrated places in my next letter; but I cannot promise much, for, though my health is much improved, my spirits are unequal, and seem to desert me when I attempt to write.

Pisa, they say, is uninhabitable in the midst of summer —we shall do, therefore, what other people do, retire to

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Florence, or to the mountains. But I will write to you our plans from Pisa, when I shall understand them better myself.

You may easily conjecture the motives which led us to forego the divine solitude of Como. To me, whose chief pleasure in life is the contemplation of nature, you may imagine how great is this loss.

Let us hear from you *once a fortnight*. Do not forget those who do not forget you.

Adieu.—Ever most sincerely yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

LETTER V.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Livorno, June 5, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

We have not heard from you since the middle of April—that is, we have received only *one* letter from you since our departure from England. It necessarily follows that some accident has intercepted them. Address, in future, to the care of Mr. Gisborne, Livorno—and I shall receive them, though sometimes somewhat circuitously, yet always securely.

We left Milan on the 1st of May, and travelled across the Apennines to Pisa. This part of the Apennine is far less beautiful than the Alps; the mountains are wide and wild, and the whole scenery broad and undetermined—the imagination cannot find a home in it. The plain of

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the Milanese, and that of Parma, is exquisitely beautiful —it is like one garden, or rather cultivated wilderness; because the corn and the meadow-grass grow under high and thick trees, festooned to one another by regular festoons of vines. On the seventh day we arrived at Pisa, where we remained three or four days. A large disagreeable city, almost without inhabitants. We then proceeded to this great trading town, where we have remained a month, and which, in a few days, we leave for the Bagni di Lucca, a kind of watering-place situated in the depth of the Apennines; the scenery surrounding this village is very fine.

We have made some acquaintance with a very amiable and accomplished lady, Mrs. Gisborne, who is the sole attraction in this most unattractive of cities. We had no idea of spending a month here, but she has made it even agreeable. We shall see something of Italian society at the Bagni di Lucca, where the most fashionable people resort.

When you send my parcel—which, by-the-bye, I should request you to direct to Mr. Gisborne—I wish you could contrive to enclose the two last parts of Clarke's Travels, relating to Greece, and belonging to Hookham. You know I subscribe there still—and I have determined to take the Examiner here. You would, therefore, oblige me, by sending it weekly, after having read it yourself, to the same direction, and so clipped, as to make as little weight as possible.

I write as if writing where perhaps my letter may never arrive.

With every good wish from all of us,

Believe me most sincerely yours,

P. B. S.

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LETTER VI.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE

(LEGHORN).

Bagni di Lucca, July 10th, 1818.

You cannot know, as some friends in England do, to whom my silence is still more inexcusable, that this silence is no proof of forgetfulness or neglect.

I have, in truth, nothing to say, but that I shall be happy to see you again, and renew our delightful walks, until the desire or the duty of seeing new things hurries us away. We have spent a month here in our accustomed solitude, with the exception of one night at the Casino; and the choice society of all ages, which I took care to pack up in a large trunk before we left England, have revisited us here. I am employed just now, having little better to do, in translating into my faint[1] and inefficient periods, the divine eloquence of Plato's Symposium; only as an exercise, or, perhaps, to give Mary some idea of the manners and feelings of the Athenians—so different on many subjects from that of any other community that ever existed.

We have almost finished Ariosto—who is entertaining and graceful, and *sometimes* a poet. Forgive me, worshippers of a more equal and tolerant divinity in poetry, if Ariosto pleases me less than you. Where is the gentle seriousness, the delicate sensibility, the calm and sus-

[1] In the first edition *fainting;* but *faint* in the later editions.

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tained energy, without which true greatness cannot be? He is so cruel, too, in his descriptions; his most prized virtues are vices almost without disguise. He constantly vindicates and embellishes revenge in its grossest form; the most deadly superstition that ever infested the world. How different from the tender and solemn enthusiasm of Petrarch—or even the delicate moral sensibility of Tasso, though somewhat obscured by an assumed and artificial style.

We read a good deal here—and we read little in Livorno. We have ridden, Mary and I, once only, to a place called Prato Fiorito, on the top of the mountains: the road, winding through forests, and over torrents, and on the verge of green ravines, affords scenery magnificently fine. I cannot describe it to you, but bid you, though vainly, come and see. I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere here, and the growth of the thunder showers with which the noon is often overshadowed, and which break and fade away towards evening into flocks of delicate clouds. Our fire-flies are fading away fast; but there is the planet Jupiter, who rises majestically over the rift in the forest-covered mountains to the south, and the pale summer lightning which is spread out every night, at intervals, over the sky. No doubt Providence has contrived these things, that, when the fire-flies go out, the low-flying owl may see her way home.

Remember me kindly to the Machinista.[1]

With the sentiment of impatience until we see you again in the autumn,

I am, yours most sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] Henry Reveley, Mrs. Gisborne's son by her first marriage.

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LETTER VII.

To WILLIAM GODWIN.

Bagni di Lucca, July 25th, 1818.

MY DEAR GODWIN,

We have, as yet, seen nothing of Italy which marks it to us as the habitation of departed greatness. The serene sky, the magnificent scenery, the delightful productions of the climate, are known to us, indeed, as the same with those which the ancients enjoyed. But Rome and Naples —even Florence, are yet to see; and if we were to write you at present a history of our impressions, it would give you no idea that we lived in Italy.

I am exceedingly delighted with the plan you propose of a book, illustrating the character of our calumniated republicans. It is precisely the subject for Mary, and I imagine, that, but for the fear of being excited to refer to books not within her reach, she would attempt to begin it here, and order the works you notice. I am unfortunately little skilled in English history, and the interest which it excites in me is so feeble, that I find it a duty to attain merely to that general knowledge of it which is indispensable.

Mary has just finished Ariosto with me, and, indeed, has attained a very competent knowledge of Italian. She is now reading Livy. I have been constantly occupied in literature, but have written little—except some translations from Plato, in which I exercised myself, in the

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despair of producing anything original. The Symposium of Plato seems to me one of the most valuable pieces of all antiquity, whether we consider the intrinsic merit of the composition, or the light which it throws on the inmost state of manners and opinions among the ancient Greeks. I have occupied myself in translating this, and it has excited me to attempt an Essay[1] upon the cause of some differences in sentiment between the Ancients and Moderns, with respect to the subject of the dialogue.

Two things give us pleasure in your last letters. The resumption of[2] Malthus, and the favourable turn of the general election. If Ministers do not find some means, totally inconceivable to me, of plunging the nation in war, do you imagine that they can subsist? Peace is all that a country, in the present state of England, seems to require, to afford it tranquillity and leisure for attempting some remedy; not to the universal evils of all constituted society, but to the peculiar system of misrule under which those evils have been exasperated now. I wish that I had health or spirits that would enable me to enter into public affairs, or that I could find words to express all that I feel and know.

The modern Italians seem a miserable people, without sensibility, or imagination, or understanding. Their outside is polished, and an intercourse with them seems to proceed with much facility, though it ends in nothing, and produces nothing. The women are particularly empty, and though possessed of the same kind of

[1] The extant fragment of this essay (never completed) will be found after the Translation of the Symposium in Vol. III.

[2] Mrs. Shelley interpolates the words *your Answer to*. It will be remembered that the renowned work of Malthus on Population derived from one of the Essays in Godwin's *Enquirer;* and that Godwin published in 1820 a rejoinder, *Of Population*. See Shelley's remarks on this rejoinder in his Letter to Mr. Gisborne of October 22, 1821.

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superficial grace, are devoid of every cultivation and refinement. They have a ball at the Casino here every Sunday, which we attend—but neither Mary nor Claire dance. I do not know whether they refrain from philosophy or protestantism.

I hear that poor Mary's book is attacked most violently in the Quarterly Review.[1] We have heard some praise of it, and among others, an article of Walter Scott's in Blackwood's Magazine.

If you should have anything to send us—and, I assure you, anything relating to England is interesting to us—commit it to the care of Ollier the bookseller, or P[eacock]—they send me a parcel every quarter.

My health is, I think, better, and, I imagine, continues to improve, but I still have busy thoughts and dispiriting cares, which I would shake off—and it is now summer. ——A thousand good wishes to yourself and your undertakings.

Ever most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

[1] No. 36 of *The Quarterly Review*, published in June, 1818, contains, beside the review of *Frankenstein*, an article on Leigh Hunt's *Foliage*, wherein the writer goes out of his way to introduce some most poisonous suggestions about Shelley, without, however, naming him. It seems likely that the authorship of the anonymous *Frankenstein* was known to the writer.

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LETTER VIII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Bagni di Lucca, July 25th, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I received on the same day your letters marked 5 and 6, the one directed to Pisa, and the other to Livorno, and I can assure you they are most welcome visitors.

Our life here is as unvaried by any external events as if we were at Marlow, where a sail up the river or a journey to London makes an epoch. Since I last wrote to you, I have ridden over to Lucca, once with Claire, and once alone; and we have been over to the Casino, where I cannot say there is anything remarkable, the women being far removed from anything which the most liberal annotator could interpret into beauty or grace, and apparently possessing no intellectual excellences to compensate the deficiency. I assure you it is well that it is so, for these dances, especially the waltz, are so exquisitely beautiful that it would be a little dangerous to the newly unfrozen senses and imaginations of us migrators from the neighbourhood of the pole. As it is —except in the dark—there could be no peril. The atmosphere here, unlike that of the rest of Italy, is diversified with clouds, which grow in the middle of the day, and sometimes bring thunder and lightning, and hail about the size of a pigeon's egg, and decrease towards the evening, leaving only those finely woven webs of

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vapour which we see in English skies, and flocks of fleecy and slowly moving clouds, which all vanish before sunset; and the nights are for ever serene, and we see a star in the east at sunset—I think it is Jupiter—almost as fine as Venus was last summer; but it wants a certain silver and aërial radiance, and soft yet piercing splendour, which belongs, I suppose, to the latter planet by virtue of its at once divine and female nature. I have forgotten to ask the ladies if Jupiter produces on them the same effect. I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere. In the evening, Mary and I often take a ride, for horses are cheap in this country. In the middle of the day, I bathe in a pool or fountain, formed in the middle of the forests by a torrent. It is surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks, and the waterfall of the stream which forms it falls into it on one side with perpetual dashing. Close to it, on the top of the rocks, are alders, and above the great chesnut trees, whose long and pointed leaves pierce the deep blue sky in strong relief. The water of this pool, which, to venture an unrhythmical paraphrase, is "sixteen feet long and ten feet wide,"[1] is as transparent as the air, so that the stones and sand at the bottom seem, as it were, trembling in the light of noonday. It is exceedingly cold also. My custom is to undress and

[1] The reference is to the third stanza of Wordsworth's beautiful poem *The Thorn* as printed in the editions current in Shelley's time:—

High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale;
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water, never dry;
I've measured it from side to side:
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

The final couplet remained from the time of the *Lyrical Ballads* till after the year 1815, when the collection in two 8vo. volumes was issued,—precisely how much later I know not; but as early as 1832 it gave place to

Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air.

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sit on the rocks, reading Herodotus, until the perspiration has subsided, and then to leap from the edge of the rock into this fountain—a practice in the hot weather excessively refreshing. This torrent is composed, as it were, of a succession of pools and waterfalls, up which I sometimes amuse myself by climbing when I bathe, and receiving the spray over all my body, whilst I clamber up the moist crags with difficulty.

I have lately found myself totally incapable of original composition. I employed my mornings, therefore, in translating the *Symposium*, which I accomplished in ten days. Mary is now transcribing it, and I am writing a prefatory essay. I have been reading scarcely anything but Greek, and a little Italian poetry with Mary. We have finished *Ariosto* together—a thing I could not have done again alone.

Frankenstein seems to have been well received; for although the unfriendly criticism of the *Quarterly* is an evil for it, yet it proves that it is read in some considerable degree, and it would be difficult for them, with any appearance of fairness, to deny it merit altogether. Their notice of me, and their exposure of their true motives for not noticing my book, shews how well understood an hostility must subsist between me and them.

The news of the result of the elections, especially that of the metropolis, is highly inspiriting. I received a letter, of two days' later date, with yours, which announced the unfortunate termination of that of Westmoreland. I wish you had sent me some of the overflowing villany of those apostates. What a beastly and pitiful wretch that Wordsworth! That such a man should be such a poet! I can compare him with no one

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but Simonides, that flatterer of the Sicilian tyrants, and at the same time the most natural and tender of lyric poets.[1]

What pleasure would it have given me if the wings of imagination could have divided the space which divides us, and I could have been of your party. I have seen nothing so beautiful as Virginia Water in its kind. And my thoughts for ever cling to Windsor Forest, and the copses of Marlow, like the clouds which hang upon the woods of the mountains, low trailing, and though they pass away, leave their best dew when they themselves have faded. You tell me that you have finished *Nightmare Abbey*. I hope that you have given the enemy no quarter. Remember, it is a sacred war. We have found an excellent quotation in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*. I will transcribe it, as I do not think you have these plays at Marlow.

"*Matthew*. Oh, it's your only fine humour, sir. Your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir. I am melancholy myself divers times, sir; and then do I no more but take pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

"*Ed. Knowell*. Sure he utters them by the gross.

"*Stephen*. Truly, sir; and I love such things out of measure.

"*Ed. Knowell*. I' faith, better than in measure, I'll undertake.

[1] The prominent part taken by Wordsworth in the Westmoreland election appears to have been the act that so excited Shelley's wrath. The curious pamphlet printed at Kendal a few weeks before the date of this letter, *Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmorland*, is now available for any one who likes to con over the case against Wordsworth from Shelley's point of view,—having been at length reprinted in the first volume of Wordsworth's Prose Works (London: Edward Moxon, Son, and Co., 1876. 3 vols.).

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"*Matthew.* Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study; it's at your service.

"*Stephen.* I thank you, sir; I shall be bold, I warrant you. *Have you a stool there to be melancholy upon?*"—*Every Man in his Humour*, Act 3, scene i.

The last expression would not make a bad motto.[1]

LETTER IX.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Bagni di Lucca, Aug. 16th, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

No new event has been added to my life since I wrote last: at least none which might not have taken place as well on the banks of the Thames as on those of the Serchio. I project soon a short excursion, of a week or so, to some of the neighbouring cities; and on the 10th of September we leave this place for Florence, when I shall at least be able to tell you of some things which you cannot see from your windows.

I have finished, by taking advantage of a few days of inspiration—which the *Camœnæ* have been lately very backward in conceding—the little poem I began sending to the press in London.[2] Ollier will send you the proofs. Its structure is slight and aëry; its subject ideal. The metre corresponds with the spirit of the poem, and varies with the flow of the feeling. I have translated,

[1] Peacock records that he adopted this passage as a second motto, omitting E. Knowell's interlocutions.

[2] *Rosalind and Helen.*

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and Mary has transcribed, the *Symposium*, as well as my poem; and I am proceeding to employ myself on a discourse, upon the subject of which the *Symposium* treats, considering the subject with reference to the difference of sentiments respecting it, existing between the Greeks and modern nations: a subject to be handled with that delicate caution which either I cannot or I will not practise in other matters, but which here I acknowledge to be necessary. Not that I have any serious thought of publishing either this discourse or the *Symposium*, at least till I return to England, when we may discuss the propriety of it.

Nightmare Abbey finished. Well, what is in it? What is it? You are as secret as if the priest of Ceres had dictated its sacred pages. However, I suppose I shall see in time, when my second parcel arrives. My first is yet absent. By what conveyance did you send it?

Pray, are you yet cured of your Nympholepsy? 'Tis a sweet disease: but one as obstinate and dangerous as any—even when the Nymph is a Poliad.[1] Whether such be the case or not, I hope your nympholeptic tale is not abandoned. The subject, if treated with a due spice of Bacchic fury, and interwoven with the manners and feelings of those divine people, who, in their very errors, are the mirrors, as it were, in which all that is delicate and graceful contemplates itself, is perhaps equal to any. What a wonderful passage there is in *Phædrus*—the beginning, I think, of one of the speeches of

[1] Peacock says, "I suppose I understood this at the time; but I have now not the most distant recollection of what it alludes to." He adds that he abandoned the design of the Nympholeptic tale "on seeing the announcement of Horace Smith's *Amarynthus the Nympholept*."

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Socrates[1]—in praise of poetic madness, and in definition of what poetry is, and how a man becomes a poet. Every man who lives in this age and desires to write poetry, ought, as a preservative against the false and narrow systems of criticism which every poetical empiric vents, to impress himself with this sentence, if he would be numbered among those to whom may apply this proud, though sublime, expression of Tasso: *Non c'è in mondo chi merita nome di creatore, che Dio ed il Poeta.*

The weather has been brilliantly fine; and now, among these mountains, the autumnal air is becoming less hot, especially in the mornings and evenings. The chesnut woods are now inexpressibly beautiful, for the chesnuts have become large, and add a new richness to the full foliage. We see here Jupiter in the east; and Venus, I believe, as the evening star, directly after sunset.

More and better in my next. Mary and Claire desire their kind remembrances.

Most faithfully your friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] Peacock says the passage alluded to is this:—"There are several kinds," says Socrates, "of divine madness. That which proceeds from the Muses taking possession of a tender and unoccupied soul, awakening, and bacchically inspiring it towards songs and other poetry, adorning myriads of ancient deeds, instructs succeeding generations; but he who, without this madness from the Muses, approaches the poetical gates, having persuaded himself that by art alone he may become sufficiently a poet, will find in the end his own imperfection, and see the poetry of his cold prudence vanish into nothingness before the light of that which has sprung from divine insanity." — *Platonis Phædrus*, p. 245, a.

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LETTER X.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(BAGNI DI LUCCA).

Florence, Thursday, 11 *o'Clock*
(*20th August*, 1818).

Dearest Mary,

We have been delayed in this city four hours, for the Austrian minister's passport, but are now on the point of setting out with a vetturino, who engages to take us on the third day to Padua; that is, we shall only sleep three nights on the road. * * * * * *[1] Yesterday's journey, performed in a one-horse cabriolet, almost without springs, over a rough road, was excessively fatiguing. * * *[2] suffered most from it; for, as to myself, there are occasions in which fatigue seems a useful medicine, as I have felt no pain in my side—a most delightful respite—since I left you. The country was various and exceedingly beautiful. Sometimes there were those low cultivated lands, with their vine festoons, and large bunches of grapes just becoming purple—at others we passed between high mountains, crowned with some of the most majestic Gothic ruins I ever saw, which frowned from the bare precipices, or were half seen among the olive copses. As we approached Florence, the country became cultivated to a very high degree, the plain was filled with the most beautiful villas, and, as far as the eye could reach, the mountains were covered with them; for the plains are

[1] These marks of omission were inserted in the first edition, but afterwards abandoned.
[2] Claire, apparently.

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bounded on all sides by blue and misty mountains. The vines are here trailed on low trellises of reeds interwoven into crosses to support them, and the grapes, now almost ripe, are exceedingly abundant. You everywhere meet those teams of beautiful white oxen, which are now labouring the little vine-divided fields with their Virgilian ploughs and carts. Florence itself, that is the Lung' Arno (for I have seen no more), I think is the most beautiful city I have yet seen. It is surrounded with cultivated hills, and from the bridge which crosses the broad channel of the Arno, the view is the most animated and elegant I ever saw. You see three or four bridges, one apparently supported by Corinthian pillars, and the white sails of the boats, relieved by the deep green of the forest, which comes to the water's edge, and the sloping hills covered with bright villas on every side. Domes and steeples rise on all sides, and the cleanliness is remarkably great. On the other side there are the foldings of the Vale of Arno above; first the hills of olive and vine, then the chesnut woods, and then the blue and misty pine forests, which invest the aërial Apennines, that fade in the distance. I have seldom seen a city so lovely at first sight as Florence.[1]

We shall travel hence within a few hours, with the speed of the post, since the distance is 190 miles, and we are to do it in three days, besides the half day, which is somewhat more than sixty miles a day. We have now got a comfortable carriage and two mules, and, thanks to Paolo, have made a very decent bargain, comprising everything, to Padua. I should say we had delightful fruit for breakfast—figs, very fine—and peaches, un-

[1] For another description of Florence see Notes on Sculpture, Vol. III, p. 50.

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fortunately gathered before they were ripe, whose smell was like what one fancies of the wakening of Paradise flowers.

Well, my dearest Mary, are you very lonely? Tell me truth, my sweetest, do you ever cry? I shall hear from you once at Venice, and once on my return here. If you love me you will keep up your spirits,—and at all events, tell me truth about it; for, I assure you, I am not of a disposition to be flattered by your sorrow, though I should be by your cheerfulness; and, above all, by seeing such fruits of my absence as were produced when we were at Geneva. What acquaintances have you made? I might have travelled to Padua with a German, who had just come from Rome, and had scarce recovered from a malaria fever, caught in the Pontine Marshes, a week or two since; and I conceded to * * *'s[1] intreaties —and to *your* absent suggestions, and omitted the opportunity, although I have no great faith in such species of contagion. It is not very hot—not at all too much so for my sensations, and the only thing that incommodes me are the gnats at night, who roar like so many humming tops in one's ear—and I do not always find zanzariere.[2] How is Willmouse and little Clara? They must be kissed for me—and you must particularly remember to speak my name to William, and see that he does not quite forget me before I return. Adieu—my dearest girl, I think that we shall soon meet. I shall write again from Venice. Adieu, dear Mary!

I have been reading the "Noble Kinsmen," in which, with the exception of that lovely scene, to which you added so much grace in reading to me, I have been disappointed. The Jailor's Daughter is a poor imitation,

[1] Claire's, I presume. [2] The curtains used to keep off gnats at night.

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and deformed. The whole story wants moral discrimination and modesty. I do not believe Shakespeare wrote a word of it.

LETTER XI.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(BAGNI DI LUCCA).

Venice, Sunday morning.
[23 *August*, 1818.]

My dearest Mary,

We arrived here last night at 12 o'clock, and it is now before breakfast the next morning. I can, of course, tell you nothing of the future; and though I shall not close this letter till post time, yet I do not know exactly when that is. Yet, if you are very impatient, look along the letter and you will see another date, when I may have something to relate. . . . .

We came from Padua hither in a gondola, and the gondoliere, among other things, without any hint on my part, began talking of Lord Byron. He said he was a *giovinotto Inglese*, with a *nome stravagante*, who lived very luxuriously, and spent great sums of money. This man, it seems, was one of Lord B.'s gondolieri. No sooner had we arrived at the inn, than the waiter began talking about him—said, that he frequented Mrs. Hoppner's *conversazioni* very much.

Our journey from Florence to Padua contained nothing which may not be related another time. At Padua, as I said, we took a gondola—and left it at three o'clock.

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These gondolas are the most convenient and beautiful boats in the world. They are finely carpeted and furnished with black, and painted black. The couches upon which you lean are extraordinarily soft, and are so disposed as to be the most comfortable to those who lean or sit. The windows have at will either Venetian plate-glass flowered, or Venetian blinds, or blinds of black cloth to shut out the light.[1] The weather here is extremely cold—indeed, sometimes very painfully so, and yesterday it began to rain. We passed the laguna in the middle of the night in a most violent storm of wind, rain, and lightning. It was very curious to observe the elements above in a state of such tremendous convulsion, and the surface of the water almost calm; for these lagunas, though five miles broad, a space enough in a storm to sink any gondola, are so shallow that the boatmen drive the boat along with a pole. The sea-water, furiously agitated by the wind, shone with sparkles like stars. Venice, now hidden and now disclosed by the driving rain, shone dimly with its lights. We were all this while safe and comfortable, except that Claire was now and then a little frightened in our cabin. Well, adieu, dearest: I shall, as Miss Byron says, resume the pen in the evening.

Sunday Night, 5 o'Clock in the Morning.

Well, I will try to relate everything in its order. After breakfast we took a gondola and went to the Hoppners'. Claire went in first, and I, who had no idea of calling, sate in the gondola. Soon, a servant came down and requested me to go upstairs. I found Mr. H. and Claire, and soon after Mrs. H., a most agreeable and amiable lady.

* * * * * *

[1] So in the later editions; but *sight* in the first.

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At three o'clock I called on Lord Byron: he was delighted to see me, and our first conversation of course consisted in the object of my visit.

* * * * * *

Well, my dear Mary, this talk went off, for I did not see in that moment how I could urge it further, and I thought that at least many points were gained in the willingness and good humour of our discussion. So he took me in his gondola—much against my will, for I wanted to return to C. at the Hoppners', across the laguna to a long sandy island, which defends Venice from the Adriatic.[1] When we disembarked, we found his horses waiting for us, and we rode along the sands of the sea, talking. Our conversation consisted in histories of his wounded feelings, and questions as to my affairs, and great professions of friendship and regard for me. He said, that if he had been in England at the time of the Chancery affair, he would have moved heaven and earth to have prevented such a decision. We talked of literary matters, his Fourth Canto, which he says is very good, and indeed repeated some stanzas of great energy to me. When we returned to his palace—which,[2]

* * * * * *

The Hoppners are the most amiable people I ever knew. They are much attached to each other, and have a nice little boy, seven months old. Mr. H. paints beautifully, and this excursion, which he has just put off, was an expedition to the Julian Alps, in this neighbourhood—for the sake of sketching, to procure winter employment. He has only a fortnight's leisure, and he has

[1] The Lido,—a locality peculiarly interesting in this connexion as furnishing a part of the scenery of *Julian and Maddalo*.

[2] Mrs. Shelley notes that "the letter is here torn."

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sacrificed two days of it to strangers whom he never saw before. Mrs. H. has hazel eyes and sweet looks.[1]

* * * * * *

Well, but the time presses, I am now going to the banker's to send you money for the journey, which I shall address to you at Florence, Post-office. Pray come instantly to Este, where I shall be waiting with Claire and Elise in the utmost anxiety for your arrival. You can pack up directly you get this letter, and employ the next day in that. The day after, get up at four o'clock, and go post to Lucca, where you will arrive at six. Then take a vetturino for Florence and arrive the same evening. From Florence to Este is three days' vetturino journey—and you could not, I think, do it quicker by the post. Make Paolo take you to good inns, as we found very bad ones, and pray avoid the Tre Mori at Bologna, perche vi sono cose inespressibili nei letti. I don't think you can, but *try* to get from Florence to Bologna in one day. Don't take the post, for it is not much faster and very expensive. I have been obliged to decide on all these things without you: I have done for the best—and, my own beloved Mary, you must soon come and scold me if I have done wrong, and kiss me if I have done right—for I am sure I do not know which—and it is only the event that can shew. We shall at least be saved the trouble of introduction, and have formed acquaintance with a lady who is so good, so beautiful, so angelically mild, that were she as wise too, she would be quite a * * *;[2] but she is not very accomplished. Her

[1] Here again Mrs. Shelley notes "Paper torn."

[2] We may fairly assume the omission to be that of Mrs. Shelley's own name: natural modesty would have deterred her from writing *quite a Mary*.

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eyes are like a reflexion of yours. Her manners are like yours when you know and like a person.

Do you know, dearest, how this letter was written? —By scraps and patches, and interrupted every minute. The gondola is now come to take us to Fusina. Este is a little place, and the house found without difficulty. I shall count four days for this letter: one day for packing, four for coming here—and on the ninth or tenth day we shall meet.

I am too late for the post—but I send an express to overtake it. Enclosed is an order for fifty pounds. If you knew all that I had to do!—

Dearest love, be well—be happy—come to me, and confide in your own constant and affectionate

P. B. S.

Kiss the blue-eyed darlings for me, and don't let William forget me. Ca[1] cannot recollect me.

[1] Clara Shelley, born at Marlow on the 3rd of September, 1817.

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LETTER XII.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(I CAPPUCCINI—ESTE).

Padua, mezzogiorno, September 22nd, 1818.

My best Mary,

I found at Mount Selice a favourable opportunity for going to Venice, where I shall try to make some arrangement for you and little Ca to come for some days, and shall meet you, if I don't write anything in the mean time, at Padua, on Thursday morning. Claire says she is obliged to come and see the Medico, whom we missed this morning, and who has appointed as the only hour at which he can be at leisure—half-past eight in the morning. You must, therefore, arrange matters so that you should come to the Stella d'Oro a little before that hour —a thing only to be accomplished by setting out at half-past three in the morning. You will by this means arrive at Venice very early in the day, and avoid the heat, which might be bad for the babe, and take the time, when she would at least sleep great part of the time. Claire will return with the return carriage, and I shall meet you, or send to you at Padua.

Meanwhile remember Charles the First—and do you be prepared to bring at least *some* of Myrra translated; bring the book also with you, and the sheets of "Prometheus Unbound," which you will find numbered from 1 to 26 on the table of the pavilion. My poor little Clara,

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how is she to-day? Indeed I am somewhat uneasy about her, and though I feel secure that there is no danger, it would be very comfortable to have some reasonable person's advice about her. The Medico at Padua is certainly a man in great practice, but I confess he does not quite satisfy me.

Am I not like a wild swan to be gone so suddenly? But in fact to set off alone to Venice required an exertion. I felt myself capable of making it, and I knew that you desired it. What will not be—if so it is destined—the lonely journey through that wide, cold France? But we shall see.

Adieu, my dearest love—remember, remember Charles the First and Myrra. I have been already imagining how you will conduct some scenes. The second volume of St. Leon begins with this proud and true sentiment—"There is nothing that the human mind can conceive, which it may not execute." Shakespeare was only a human being.

Adieu till Thursday. Your ever affectionate

P. B. S.

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LETTER XIII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Este, October 8, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have not written to you, I think, for six weeks. But I have been on the point of writing many times, and have often felt that I had many things to say. But I have not been without events to disturb and distract me, amongst which is the death of my little girl. She died of a disorder peculiar to the climate. We have all had bad spirits enough, and I, in addition, bad health. I *intend* to be better soon: there is no malady, bodily or mental, which does not either kill or is killed.

We left the Baths of Lucca, I think, the day after I wrote to you—on a visit to Venice—partly for the sake of seeing the city. We made a very delightful acquaintance there with a Mr. and Mrs. Hoppner, the gentleman an Englishman, and the lady a Swissesse, mild and beautiful, and unprejudiced, in the best sense of the word. The kind attentions of these people made our short stay at Venice very pleasant. I saw Lord Byron, and really hardly knew him again; he is changed into the liveliest and happiest-looking man I ever met. He read me the first canto of his "Don Juan"—a thing in the style of Beppo, but infinitely better, and dedicated to Southey, in ten or a dozen stanzas, more like a mixture of wormwood and verdigrease than satire. Venice is a

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wonderfully fine city. The approach to it over the laguna, with its domes and turrets glittering in a long line over the blue waves, is one of the finest architectural delusions in the world. It seems to have—and literally it has—its foundations in the sea. The silent streets are paved with water, and you hear nothing but the dashing of the oars, and the occasional cries of the gondolieri. I heard nothing of Tasso. The gondolas themselves are things of a most romantic and picturesque appearance; I can only compare them to moths of which a coffin might have been the chrysalis. They are hung with black, and painted black, and carpeted with grey; they curl at the prow and stern, and at the former there is a nondescript beak of shining steel, which glitters at the end of its long black mass.

The Doge's palace, with its library, is a fine monument of aristocratic power. I saw the dungeons, where these scoundrels used to torment their victims. They are of three kinds—one adjoining the place of trial, where the prisoners destined to immediate execution were kept. I could not descend to them, because the day on which I visited it, was festa. Another under the leads of the palace, where the sufferers were roasted to death or madness by the ardours of an Italian sun: and others called the Pozzi—or wells, deep underneath, and communicating with those on the roof by secret passages—where the prisoners were confined sometimes half up to their middles in stinking water. When the French came here, they found only one old man in the dungeons, and he could not speak. But Venice, which was once a tyrant, is now the next worse thing, a slave; for in fact it ceased to be free, or worth our regret as a nation, from the moment that the oligarchy usurped the rights of the

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people. Yet, I do not imagine that it was ever so degraded as it has been since the French, and especially the Austrian yoke. The Austrians take sixty per cent. in taxes, and impose free quarters on the inhabitants. A horde of German soldiers, as vicious and more disgusting than the Venetians themselves, insult these miserable people. I had no conception of the excess to which avarice, cowardice, superstition, ignorance, passionless lust, and all the inexpressible brutalities which degrade human nature, could be carried, until I had passed a few days at Venice.

We have been living this last month near the little town from which I date this letter, in a very pleasant villa which has been lent to us, and we are now on the point of proceeding to Florence, Rome, and Naples—at which last city we shall spend the winter, and return northwards in the spring. Behind us here are the Euganean hills, not so beautiful as those of the Bagni di Lucca, with Arquà, where Petrarch's house and tomb are religiously preserved and visited. At the end of our garden is an extensive Gothic castle, now the habitation of owls and bats, where the Medici family resided before they came to Florence. We see before us the wide flat plains of Lombardy, in which we see the sun and moon rise and set, and the evening star, and all the golden magnificence of autumnal clouds. But I reserve wonder for Naples.

I have been writing—and indeed have just finished the first act of a lyric and classical drama, to be called "Prometheus Unbound." Will you tell me what there is in Cicero about a drama supposed to have been written by Æschylus under this title.

I ought to say that I have just read Malthus in a

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French translation. Malthus is a very clever man, and the world would be a great gainer if it would seriously take his lessons into consideration, if it were capable of attending seriously to anything but mischief—but what on earth does he mean by some of his inferences!

Yours ever faithfully,

P. B. S.

I will write again from Rome and Florence—in better spirits, and to more agreeable purpose, I hope. You saw those beautiful stanzas in the fourth canto about the Nymph Egeria.[1] Well, I did not whisper a word about nympholepsy: I hope you acquit me—and I hope you will not carry delicacy so far as to let this suppress anything nympholeptic.

[1] The reference is of course to Canto IV, stanzas cxv to cxix, of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. See foot-note at p. 27 of this volume.

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LETTER XIV.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Ferrara, Nov. 8th, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

We left Este yesterday on our journey towards Naples. The roads were particularly bad; we have, therefore, accomplished only two days' journey, of eighteen and twenty-four miles each, and you may imagine that our horses must be tolerably good ones, to drag our carriage, with five people and heavy luggage, through deep and clayey roads. The roads are, however, good during the rest of the way.

The country is flat, but intersected by lines of wood, trellised with vines, whose broad leaves are now stamped with the redness of their decay. Every here and there one sees people employed in agricultural labours, and the plough, the harrow, or the cart, drawn by long teams of milk-white or dove-coloured oxen of immense size and exquisite beauty. This, indeed, might be the country of Pasiphaes. In one farm-yard I was shewn sixty-three of these lovely oxen, tied to their stalls, in excellent condition. A farm-yard in this part of Italy is somewhat different from one in England. First, the house, which is large and high, with strange-looking unpainted window-shutters, generally closed, and dreary beyond conception. The farm-yard and out-buildings, however, are usually in the neatest order. The threshing-floor is not

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under cover, but like that described in the Georgics, usually flattened by a broken column, and neither the mole, nor the toad, nor the ant, can find on its area a crevice for their dwelling. Around it, at this season, are piled the stacks of the leaves and stalks of Indian corn, which has lately been threshed and dried upon its surface. At a little distance are vast heaps of many-coloured zucchi or pumpkins, some of enormous size, piled as winter food for the hogs. There are turkeys, too, and fowls wandering about, and two or three dogs, who bark with a sharp hylactism. The people who are occupied with the care of these things seem neither ill-clothed nor ill-fed, and the blunt incivility of their manners has an English air with it, very discouraging to those who are accustomed to the impudent and polished lying of the inhabitants of the cities. I should judge the agricultural resources of this country to be immense, since it can wear so flourishing an appearance, in spite of the enormous discouragements which the various tyranny of the governments inflicts on it. I ought to say that one of the farms belongs to a Jew banker at Venice, another Shylock.—We arrived late at the inn where I now write; it was once the palace of a Venetian nobleman, and is now an excellent inn. To-morrow we are going to see the sights of Ferrara.

Nov. 9.

We have had heavy rain and thunder all night; and the former still continuing, we went in the carriage about the town. We went first to look at the cathedral, but the beggars very soon made us sound a retreat; so, whether, as it is said, there is a copy of a picture of Michael Angelo there or no, I cannot tell. At the public library we were more successful. This is, indeed,

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a magnificent establishment, containing, as they say, 160,000 volumes. We saw some illuminated manuscripts of church music, with the verses of the psalms interlined between the square notes, each of which consisted of the most delicate tracery, in colours inconceivably vivid. They belonged to the neighbouring convent of Certosa, and are three or four hundred years old; but their hues are as fresh as if they had been executed yesterday. The tomb of Ariosto occupies one end of the largest saloon of which the library is composed; it is formed of various marbles, surmounted by an expressive bust of the poet, and subscribed with a few Latin verses, in a less miserable taste than those usually employed for similar purposes. But the most interesting exhibitions here, are the writings, &c., of Ariosto and Tasso, which are preserved, and were concealed from the undistinguishing depredations of the French with pious care. There is the arm-chair of Ariosto, an old plain wooden piece of furniture, the hard seat of which was once occupied by, but has now survived its cushion, as it has its master. I could fancy Ariosto sitting in it; and the satires in his own handwriting which they unfold beside it, and the old bronze inkstand, loaded with figures, which belonged also to him, assists the willing delusion. This inkstand has an antique, rather than an ancient appearance. Three nymphs lean forth from the circumference, and on the top of the lid stands a cupid, winged and looking up, with a torch in one hand, his bow in the other, and his quiver beside him. A medal was bound round the skeleton of Ariosto, with his likeness impressed upon it. I cannot say I think it had much native expression, but, perhaps, the artist was in fault. On the reverse is a hand, cutting with a

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pair of scissors the tongue from a serpent, upraised from the grass, with this legend—*Pro bono malum.* What this reverse of the boasted Christian maxim means, or how it applies to Ariosto, either as a satirist or a serious writer, I cannot exactly tell. The cicerone attempted to explain, and it is to his commentary that my bewildering is probably due—if, indeed, the meaning be very plain, as is possibly the case.

There is here a manuscript of the entire Gerusalemme Liberata, written by Tasso's own hand; a manuscript of some poems, written in prison, to the Duke Alfonso; and the satires of Ariosto, written also by his own hand; and the Pastor Fido of Guarini. The Gerusalemme, though it had evidently been copied and recopied, is interlined, particularly towards the end, with numerous corrections. The hand-writing of Ariosto is a small, firm, and pointed character, expressing, as I should say, a strong and keen, but circumscribed energy of mind; that of Tasso is large, free, and flowing, except that there is a checked expression in the midst of its flow, which brings the letters into a smaller compass than one expected from the beginning of the word. It is the symbol of an intense and earnest mind, exceeding at times its own depth, and admonished to return by the chillness of the waters of oblivion striking upon its adventurous feet. You know I always seek in what I see the manifestation of something beyond the present and tangible object; and as we do not agree in physiognomy, so we may not agree now. But my business is to relate my own sensations, and not to attempt to inspire others with them. Some of the MSS. of Tasso were sonnets to his persecutor, which contain a great deal of what is called flattery. If Alfonso's ghost were asked how he felt those praises now,

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I wonder what he would say. But to me there is much more to pity than to condemn in these intreaties and praises of Tasso. It is as a bigot prays to and praises his god, whom he knows to be the most remorseless, capricious, and inflexible of tyrants, but whom he knows also to be omnipotent. Tasso's situation was widely different from that of any persecuted being of the present day; for, from the depth of dungeons, public opinion might now at length be awakened to an echo that would startle the oppressor. But then there was no hope. There is something irresistibly pathetic to me in the sight of Tasso's own handwriting, moulding expressions of adulation and intreaty to a deaf and stupid tyrant, in an age when the most heroic virtue would have exposed its possessor to hopeless persecution, and—such is the alliance between virtue and genius—which unoffending genius could not escape.

We went afterwards to see his prison in the hospital of Sant' Anna, and I enclose you a piece of the wood of the very door, which for seven years and three months divided this glorious being from the air and the light which had nourished in him those influences which he has communicated, through his poetry, to thousands. The dungeon is low and dark, and, when I say that it is really a very decent dungeon, I speak as one who has seen the prisons in the doge's palace of Venice. But it is a horrible abode for the coarsest and meanest thing that ever wore the shape of man, much more for one of delicate susceptibilities and elevated fancies. It is low, and has a grated window, and being sunk some feet below the level of the earth, is full of unwholesome damps. In the darkest corner is a mark in the wall where the chains were rivetted, which bound him hand

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and foot. After some time, at the instance of some Cardinal, his friend, the Duke allowed his victim a fireplace; the mark where it was walled up yet remains.

At the entrance of the Liceo, where the library is, we were met by a penitent; his form was completely enveloped in a ghost-like drapery of white flannel; his bare feet were sandalled; and there was a kind of network visor drawn over his eyes, so as entirely to conceal his face. I imagine that this man had been adjudged to suffer this penance for some crime known only to himself and his confessor, and this kind of exhibition is a striking instance of the power of the Catholic superstition over the human mind. He passed, rattling his wooden box for charity.[1]

Adieu.—You will hear from me again before I arrive at Naples.

Yours, ever sincerely,

P. B. S.

[1] Mrs. Shelley remarks in a footnote that "these penitents ask alms, to be spent in masses for the souls in purgatory."

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LETTER XV.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Bologna, Monday, Nov. 9th, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have seen a quantity of things here—churches, palaces, statues, fountains, and pictures; and my brain is at this moment like a portfolio of an architect, or a print-shop, or a common-place book. I will try to recollect something of what I have seen; for indeed it requires, if it will obey, an act of volition. First, we went to the cathedral, which contains nothing remarkable, except a kind of shrine, or rather a marble canopy, loaded with sculptures, and supported on four marble columns. We went then to a palace—I am sure I forget the name of it—where we saw a large gallery of pictures. Of course, in a picture gallery you see three hundred pictures you forget, for one you remember. I remember, however, an interesting picture by Guido, of the Rape of Proserpine, in which Proserpine casts back her languid and half-unwilling eyes, as it were, to the flowers she had left ungathered in the fields of Enna. There was an exquisitely executed piece of Correggio, about four saints, one of whom seemed to have a pet dragon in a leash. I was told that it was the devil who was bound in that style—but who can make anything of four saints? For what can they be supposed to be

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about? There was one painting, indeed, by this master, Christ beatified, inexpressibly fine. It is a half figure, seated on a mass of clouds, tinged with an ætherial, rose-like lustre; the arms are expanded; the whole frame seems dilated with expression; the countenance is heavy, as it were, with the weight of the rapture of the spirit; the lips parted, but scarcely parted, with the breath of intense but regulated passion; the eyes are calm and benignant; the whole features harmonized in majesty and sweetness. The hair is parted on the forehead, and falls in heavy locks on each side. It is motionless, but seems as if the faintest breath would move it. The colouring, I suppose, must be very good, if I could remark and understand it. The sky is of a pale aërial orange, like the tints of latest sunset; it does not seem painted around and beyond the figure, but everything seems to have absorbed, and to have been penetrated by its hues. I do not think we saw any other of Correggio, but this specimen gives me a very exalted idea of his powers.

We went to see heaven knows how many more palaces—Ranuzzi, Marriscalchi, Aldobrandi. If you want Italian names for any purpose, here they are; I should be glad of them if I was writing a novel. I saw many more of Guido. One, a Samson drinking water out of an ass's jaw-bone, in the midst of the slaughtered Philistines. Why he is supposed to do this, God, who gave him this jaw-bone, alone knows—but certain it is, that the painting is a very fine one. The figure of Samson stands in strong relief in the foreground, coloured, as it were, in the hues of human life, and full of strength and elegance. Round him lie the Philistines in all the attitudes of death. One prone, with the slight convulsion of pain just passing from his forehead, whilst on his lips and chin

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death lies as heavy as sleep. Another leaning on his arm, with his hand, white and motionless, hanging out beyond. In the distance, more dead bodies; and, still further beyond, the blue sea and the blue mountains, and one white and tranquil sail.

There is a Murder of the Innocents, also, by Guido, finely coloured, with much fine expression—but the subject is very horrible, and it seemed deficient in strength —at least, you require the highest ideal energy, the most poetical and exalted conception of the subject, to reconcile you to such a contemplation. There was a Jesus Christ crucified, by the same, very fine. One gets tired, indeed, whatever may be the conception and execution of it, of seeing that monotonous and agonized form for ever exhibited in one prescriptive attitude of torture. But the Magdalen, clinging to the cross with the look of passive and gentle despair beaming from beneath her bright flaxen hair, and the figure of St. John, with his looks uplifted in passionate compassion; his hands clasped, and his fingers twisting themselves together, as it were, with involuntary anguish; his feet almost writhing up from the ground with the same sympathy; and the whole of this arrayed in colours of a diviner nature, yet most like nature's self:—of the contemplation of this one would never weary.

There was a "Fortune" too, of Guido; a piece of mere beauty. There was the figure of Fortune on a globe, eagerly proceeding onwards, and Love was trying to catch her back by the hair, and her face was half turned towards him; her long chesnut hair was floating in the stream of the wind, and threw its shadow over her fair forehead. Her hazel eyes were fixed on her pursuer with a meaning look of playfulness, and a light

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smile was hovering on her lips. The colours which arrayed her delicate limbs were ætherial and warm.

But, perhaps, the most interesting of all the pictures of Guido which I saw was a Madonna Lattante. She is leaning over her child, and the maternal feelings with which she is pervaded are shadowed forth on her soft and gentle countenance, and in her simple and affectionate gestures—there is what an unfeeling observer would call a dullness in the expression of her face; her eyes are almost closed; her lip depressed; there is a serious, and even a heavy relaxation, as it were, of all the muscles which are called into action by ordinary emotions; but it is only as if the spirit of love, almost insupportable from its intensity, were brooding over and weighing down the soul, or whatever it is, without which the material frame is inanimate and inexpressive.

There is another painter here, called Franceschini, a Bolognese, who, though certainly very inferior to Guido, is yet a person of excellent powers. One entire church, that of Santa Catarina, is covered by his works. I do not know whether any of his pictures have ever been seen in England. His colouring is less warm than that of Guido, but nothing can be more clear and delicate; it is as if he could have dipped his pencil in the hues of some serenest and star-shining twilight. His forms have the same delicacy and aërial loveliness; their eyes are all bright with innocence and love; their lips scarce divided by some gentle and sweet emotion. His winged children are the loveliest ideal beings ever created by the human mind. These are generally, whether in the capacity of Cherubim or Cupid, accessories to the rest of the picture; and the underplot of their lovely and infantine play is something almost pathetic, from the excess of its

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unpretending beauty. One of the best of his pieces is an Annunciation of the Virgin; the Angel is beaming in beauty; the Virgin, soft, retiring, and simple.

We saw besides one picture of Raphael—St. Cecilia; this is in another and higher style; you forget that it is a picture as you look at it; and yet it is most unlike any of those things which we call reality. It is of the inspired and ideal kind, and seems to have been conceived and executed in a similar state of feeling to that which produced among the ancients those perfect specimens of poetry and sculpture which are the baffling models of succeeding generations. There is a unity and a perfection in it of an incommunicable kind. The central figure, St. Cecilia, seems rapt in such inspiration as produced her image in the painter's mind; her deep, dark, eloquent eyes lifted up; her chesnut hair flung back from her forehead—she holds an organ in her hands—her countenance, as it were, calmed by the depth of its passion and rapture, and penetrated throughout with the warm and radiant light of life. She is listening to the music of heaven, and, as I imagine, has just ceased to sing, for the four figures that surround her evidently point, by their attitudes, towards her; particularly St. John, who, with a tender yet impassioned gesture, bends his countenance towards her, languid with the depth of his emotion. At her feet lie various instruments of music, broken and unstrung. Of the colouring I do not speak; it eclipses nature, yet it has all her truth and softness.

We saw some pictures of Domenichino, Carracci, Albano, Guercino, Elisabetta Sirani. The two former—remember, I do not pretend to taste—I cannot admire. Of the latter there are some beautiful Madonnas. There

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are several of Guercino, which they said were very fine. I dare say they were, for the strength and complication of his figures made my head turn round. One, indeed, was certainly powerful. It was the representation of the founder of the Carthusians exercising his austerities in the desert, with a youth as his attendant, kneeling beside him at an altar: on another altar stood a skull and a crucifix; and around were the rocks and the trees of the wilderness. I never saw such a figure as this fellow. His face was wrinkled like a dried snake's skin, and drawn in long hard lines: his very hands were wrinkled. He looked like an animated mummy. He was clothed in a loose dress of death-coloured flannel, such as you might fancy a shroud might be, after it had wrapt a corpse a month or two. It had a yellow, putrified, ghastly hue, which it cast on all the objects around, so that the hands and face of the Carthusian and his companion were jaundiced by this sepulchral glimmer. Why write books against religion, when we may hang up such pictures? But the world either will not or cannot see. The gloomy effect of this was softened, and, at the same time, its sublimity diminished, by the figure of the Virgin and Child in the sky, looking down with admiration on the monk, and a beautiful flying figure of an angel.

Enough of pictures. I saw the place where Guido and his mistress, Elisabetta Sirani, were buried. This lady was poisoned at the age of twenty-six, by another lover, a rejected one, of course. Our guide said she was very ugly, and that we might see her portrait to-morrow.

Well, good-night, for the present. "To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new."

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Nov. 10.

To-day we first went to see those divine pictures of Raphael and Guido again, and then rode up the mountains, behind this city, to visit a chapel dedicated to the Madonna. It made me melancholy to see that they had been varnishing and restoring some of these pictures, and that even some had been pierced by the French bayonets. These are symptoms of the mortality of man; and, perhaps, few of his works are more evanescent than paintings. Sculpture retains its freshness for twenty centuries—the Apollo and the Venus are as they were. But books are perhaps the only productions of man coeval with the human race. Sophocles and Shakespeare can be produced and reproduced for ever. But how evanescent are paintings, and must necessarily be. Those of Zeuxis and Apelles are no more, and perhaps they bore the same relation to Homer and Æschylus, that those of Guido and Raphael bear to Dante and Petrarch. There is one refuge from the despondency of this contemplation. The material part, indeed, of their works must perish, but they survive in the mind of man, and the remembrances connected with them are transmitted from generation to generation. The poet embodies them in his creations; the systems of philosophers are modelled to gentleness by their contemplation; opinion, that legislator, is infected with their influence; men become better and wiser; and the unseen seeds are perhaps thus sown, which shall produce a plant more excellent even than that from which they fell. But all this might as well be said or thought at Marlow as Bologna.

The chapel of the Madonna is a very pretty Corinthian building—very beautiful, indeed. It commands a fine view of these fertile plains, the many-folded Apen-

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nines, and the city. I have just returned from a moonlight walk through Bologna. It is a city of colonnades, and the effect of moonlight is strikingly picturesque. There are two towers here—one 400 feet high—ugly things, built of brick, which lean both different ways; and with the delusion of moonlight shadows, you might almost fancy that the city is rocked by an earthquake. They say they were built so on purpose; but I observe in all the plain of Lombardy the church towers lean.

Adieu.—God grant you patience to read this long letter, and courage to support the expectation of the next. Pray part them from the *Cobbetts* on your breakfast table—they may fight it out in your mind.

Yours ever, most sincerely,

P. B. S.

LETTER XVI.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Rome, November 20th, 1818.

My dear Peacock,

Behold me in the capital of the vanished world! But I have seen nothing except St. Peter's and the Vatican, overlooking the city in the mist of distance, and the Dogana, where they took us to have our luggage examined, which is built between the ruins of a temple to Antoninus Pius. The Corinthian columns rise over the dwindled palaces of the modern town, and the wrought cornice is changed on one side, as it were, to masses of

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wave-worn precipice, which overhang you, far, far on high.

I take advantage of this rainy evening, and before Rome has effaced all other recollections, to endeavour to recall the vanished scenes through which we have passed. We left Bologna, I forget on what day, and passing by Rimini, Fano, and Foligno, along the Via Flaminia and Terni, have arrived at Rome after ten days' somewhat tedious, but most interesting, journey. The most remarkable things we saw were the Roman excavations in the rock, and the great waterfall of Terni. Of course you have heard that there are a Roman bridge and a triumphal arch at Rimini, and in what excellent taste they are built. The bridge is not unlike the Strand bridge, but more bold in proportion, and of course infinitely smaller. From Fano we left the coast of the Adriatic, and entered the Apennines, following the course of the Metaurus, the banks of which were the scene of the defeat of Asdrubal: and it is said (you can refer to the book) that Livy has given a very exact and animated description of it. I forget all about it, but shall look as soon as our boxes are opened. Following the river, the vale contracts, the banks of the river become steep and rocky, the forests of oak and ilex which overhang its emerald-coloured stream, cling to their abrupt precipices. About four miles from Fossombrone, the river forces for itself a passage between the walls and toppling precipices of the loftiest Apennines, which are here rifted to their base, and undermined by the narrow and tumultuous torrent. It was a cloudy morning, and we had no conception of the scene that awaited us. Suddenly the low clouds were struck by the clear north wind, and like curtains of the finest gauze, removed one by one, were

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drawn from before the mountain, whose heaven-cleaving pinnacles and black crags overhanging one another, stood at length defined in the light of day. The road runs parallel to the river, at a considerable height, and is carried through the mountain by a vaulted cavern. The marks of the chisel of the legionaries of the Roman Consul are yet evident.

We passed on day after day, until we came to Spoleto, I think the most romantic city I ever saw. There is here an aqueduct of astonishing elevation, which unites two rocky mountains,—there is the path of a torrent below, whitening the green dell with its broad and barren track of stones, and above there is a castle, apparently of great strength and of tremendous magnitude, which overhangs the city, and whose marble bastions are perpendicular with the precipice. I never saw a more impressive picture; in which the shapes of nature are of the grandest order, but over which the creations of man, sublime from their antiquity and greatness seem to predominate. The castle was built by Belisarius or Narses, I forget which, but was of that epoch.

From Spoleto we went to Terni, and saw the cataract of the Velino. The glaciers of Montanvert and the source of the Arveiron is the grandest spectacle I ever saw. This is the second. Imagine a river sixty feet in breadth, with a vast volume of waters, the outlet of a great lake among the higher mountains, falling 300 feet into a sightless gulf of snow-white vapour, which bursts up for ever and for ever from a circle of black crags, and thence leaping downwards, make five or six other cataracts, each fifty or a hundred feet high, which exhibit, on a smaller scale, and with beautiful and sublime variety the same appearances. But words (and far less could painting)

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will not express it. Stand upon the brink of the platform of cliff which is directly opposite. You see the ever-moving water stream down. It comes in thick and tawny folds, flaking off like solid snow gliding down a mountain. It does not seem hollow within, but without it is unequal, like the folding of linen thrown carelessly down; your eye follows it, and it is lost below; not in the black rocks which gird it around, but in its own foam and spray in the cloudlike vapours boiling up from below, which is not like rain, nor mist, nor spray, nor foam, but water, in a shape wholly unlike anything I ever saw before. It is as white as snow, but thick and impenetrable to the eye. The very imagination is bewildered in it. A thunder comes up from the abyss wonderful to hear; for, though it ever sounds, it is never the same, but, modulated by the changing motion, rises and falls intermittingly; we passed half an hour in one spot looking at it, and thought but a few minutes had gone by. The surrounding scenery is in its kind, the loveliest and most sublime that can be conceived. In our first walk we passed through some olive groves of large and ancient trees, whose hoary and twisted trunks leaned in all directions. We then crossed a path of orange trees by the river side, laden with their golden fruit, and came to a forest of ilex of a large size, whose evergreen and acorn-bearing boughs were inter-twined over our winding path. Around, hemming in the narrow vale, were pinnacles of lofty mountains of pyramidical rock clothed with all evergreen plants and trees; the vast pine whose feathery foliage trembled in the blue air, the ilex that ancestral inhabitant of these mountains, the arbutus with its crimson-coloured fruit and glittering leaves. After an hour's walk we came beneath the cataract of Terni, within the distance of half

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a mile; nearer you cannot approach, for the Nar, which has here its confluence with the Velino, bars the passage. We then crossed the river formed by this confluence, over a narrow natural bridge of rock, and saw the cataract from the platform I first mentioned. We think of spending some time next year near this waterfall. The inn is very bad, or we should have stayed there longer.

We came from Terni last night to a place called Nepi, and to-day arrived at Rome across the much-belied Campagna di Roma, a place I confess infinitely to my taste. It is a flattering picture of Bagshot Heath. But then there are the Apennines on one side, and Rome and St. Peter's on the other, and it is intersected by perpetual dells clothed with arbutus and ilex.

Adieu—very faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

LETTER XVII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Naples, December 22, 1818.

My dear Peacock,

I have received a letter from you here, dated November 1st; you see the reciprocation of letters from the term of our travels is more slow. I entirely agree with what you say about Childe Harold. The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him

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in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one. Nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt and desperation. The fact is, that first, the Italian women with whom he associates are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon—the most ignorant, the most disgusting, the most bigoted; countesses smell so strongly of garlic, that an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, L. B. is familiar with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man, and who do not scruple to avow practices, which are not only not named, but I believe seldom even conceived in England. He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself; and contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts the nature and the destiny of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair? But that he is a great poet, I think the address to Ocean proves. And he has a certain degree of candour while you talk to him, but unfortunately it does not outlast your departure. No, I do not doubt, and for his sake, I ought to hope, that his present career must end soon in some violent circumstance.

Since I last wrote to you, I have seen the ruins of Rome, the Vatican, St. Peter's, and all the miracles of ancient and modern art contained in that majestic city. The impression of it exceeds anything I have ever experienced in my travels. We stayed there only a week, intending to return at the end of February, and devote two or three months to its mines of inexhaustible con-

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templation, to which period I refer you for a minute account of it. We visited the Forum and the ruins of the Coliseum every day. The Coliseum is unlike any work of human hands I ever saw before. It is of enormous height and circuit, and the arches built of massy stones are piled on one another, and jut into the blue air, shattered into the forms of overhanging rocks. It has been changed by time into the image of an amphitheatre of rocky hills overgrown by the wild olive, the myrtle, and the fig-tree, and threaded by little paths, which wind among its ruined stairs and immeasurable galleries: the copse-wood overshadows you as you wander through its labyrinths, and the wild weeds of this climate of flowers bloom under your feet. The arena is covered with grass, and pierces, like the skirts of a natural plain, the chasms of the broken arches around. But a small part of the exterior circumference remains—it is exquisitely light and beautiful; and the effect of the perfection of its architecture, adorned with ranges of Corinthian pilasters, supporting a bold cornice, is such, as to diminish the effect of its greatness. The interior is all ruin. I can scarcely believe that when encrusted with Dorian marble and ornamented by columns of Egyptian granite, its effect could have been so sublime and so impressive as in its present state. It is open to the sky, and it was the clear and sunny weather of the end of November in this climate when we visited it, day after day.

Near it is the arch of Constantine, or rather the arch of Trajan; for the servile and avaricious senate of degraded Rome, ordered that the monument of his predecessor should be demolished in order to dedicate one to the Christian reptile, who had crept among the blood of

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his murdered family to the supreme power. It is exquisitely beautiful and perfect. The Forum is a plain in the midst of Rome, a kind of desert full of heaps of stones and pits, and though so near the habitations of men, is the most desolate place you can conceive. The ruins of temples stand in and around it, shattered columns and ranges of others complete, supporting cornices of exquisite workmanship, and vast vaults of shattered domes distinct with regular compartments, once filled with sculptures of ivory or brass. The temples of Jupiter, and Concord, and Peace, and the Sun, and the Moon, and Vesta, are all within a short distance of this spot. Behold the wrecks of what a great nation once dedicated to the abstractions of the mind! Rome is a city, as it were, of the dead, or rather of those who cannot die, and who survive the puny generations which inhabit and pass over the spot which they have made sacred to eternity. In Rome, at least in the first enthusiasm of your recognition of ancient time, you see nothing of the Italians. The nature of the city assists the delusion, for its vast and antique walls describe a circumference of sixteen miles, and thus the population is thinly scattered over this space, nearly as great as London. Wide wild fields are enclosed within it, and there are grassy lanes and copses winding among the ruins, and a great green hill, lonely and bare, which overhangs the Tiber. The gardens of the modern palaces are like wild woods of cedar, and cypress, and pine, and the neglected walks are overgrown with weeds. The English burying-place is a green slope near the walls, under the pyramidal tomb of Cestius, and is, I think, the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld. To see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh, when we

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first visited it, with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep. Such is the human mind, and so it peoples with its wishes vacancy and oblivion.

I have told you little about Rome; but I reserve the Pantheon, and St. Peter's, and the Vatican, and Raphael, for my return. About a fortnight ago I left Rome, and Mary and Claire followed in three days, for it was necessary to procure lodgings here without alighting at an inn. From my peculiar mode of travelling I saw little of the country, but could just observe that the wild beauty of the scenery and the barbarous ferocity of the inhabitants progressively increased. On entering Naples, the first circumstance that engaged my attention was an assassination. A youth ran out of a shop, pursued by a woman with a bludgeon, and a man armed with a knife. The man overtook him, and with one blow in the neck laid him dead in the road. On my expressing the emotions of horror and indignation which I felt, a Calabrian priest, who travelled with me, laughed heartily, and attempted to quiz me, as what the English call a flat. I never felt such an inclination to beat any one. Heaven knows I have little power, but he saw that I looked extremely displeased, and was silent. This same man, a fellow of gigantic strength and stature, had expressed the most frantic terror of robbers on the road: he cried at the sight of my pistol, and it had been with great difficulty that the joint exertions of myself and the vetturino had quieted his hysterics.

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But external nature in these delightful regions contrasts with and compensates for the deformity and degradation of humanity. We have a lodging divided from the sea by the royal gardens, and from our windows we see perpetually the blue waters of the bay, forever changing, yet forever the same, and encompassed by the mountainous island of Capreæ, the lofty peaks which overhang Salerno, and the woody hill of Posilipo, whose promontories hide from us Misenum and the lofty isle Inarime,[1] which, with its divided summit, forms the opposite horn of the bay. From the pleasant walks of the garden we see Vesuvius; a smoke by day and a fire by night is seen upon its summit, and the glassy sea often reflects its light or shadow. The climate is delicious. We sit without a fire, with the windows open, and have almost all the productions of an English summer. The weather is usually like what Wordsworth calls "the first fine day of March;" sometimes very much warmer, though perhaps it wants that "each minute sweeter than before," which gives an intoxicating sweetness to the awakening of the earth from its winter's sleep in England. We have made two excursions, one to Baiæ and one to Vesuvius, and we propose to visit, successively, the islands, Pæstum, Pompeii, and Beneventum.

We set off an hour after sunrise one radiant morning in a little boat; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a wave upon the sea, which was so translucent that you could see the hollow caverns clothed with the glaucous sea-moss, and the leaves and branches of those delicate weeds that pave the unequal bottom of the water. As noon approached, the heat, and especially the light,

[1] Mrs. Shelley explains in a foot-note that this is "the ancient name of Ischia." *Inarime* is, speaking more exactly, the Tuscan name,—the classical name being *Ænaria*.

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became intense. We passed Posilipo, and came first to the eastern point of the bay of Puzzoli,[1] which is within the great bay of Naples, and which again incloses that of Baiæ. Here are lofty rocks and craggy islets, with arches and portals of precipice standing in the sea, and enormous caverns, which echoed faintly with the murmur of the languid tide. This is called La Scuola di Virgilio. We then went directly across to the promontory of Misenum, leaving the precipitous island of Nisida on the right. Here we were conducted to see the Mare Morto, and the Elysian fields; the spot on which Virgil places the scenery of the Sixth Æneid. Though extremely beautiful, as a lake, and woody hills, and this divine sky must make it, I confess my disappointment. The guide shewed us an antique cemetery, where the niches used for placing the cinerary urns of the dead yet remain. We then coasted the bay of Baiæ to the left, in which we saw many picturesque and interesting ruins; but I have to remark that we never disembarked but we were disappointed—while from the boat the effect of the scenery was inexpressibly delightful. The colours of the water and the air breathe over all things here the radiance of their own beauty. After passing the bay of Baiæ, and observing the ruins of its antique grandeur standing like rocks in the transparent sea under our boat, we landed to visit lake Avernus. We passed through the cavern of the Sibyl (not Virgil's Sibyl) which pierces one of the hills which circumscribe the lake, and came to a calm and lovely basin of water, surrounded by dark woody hills, and profoundly solitary. Some vast ruins of the temple of Pluto stand on a lawny hill on one side of

[1] Usually *Pozzuoli* (the ancient *Puteoli* or *Dicæarchea*). I do not know whether there is authority for the orthography of the text. At p. 67 the same name is spelt *Pozzoli*.

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it, and are reflected in its windless mirror. It is far more beautiful than the Elysian fields—but there are all the materials for beauty in the latter, and the Avernus was once a chasm of deadly and pestilential vapours. About half a mile from Avernus, a high hill called Monte Novo, was thrown up by volcanic fire.

Passing onward we came to Pozzoli, the ancient Dicæarchea, where there are the columns remaining of a temple to Serapis, and the wreck of an enormous amphitheatre, changed, like the Coliseum, into a natural hill of[1] the overteeming vegetation. Here also is the Solfatara, of which there is a poetical description in the Civil War of Petronius, beginning—"Est locus," and in which the verses of the poet are infinitely finer than what he describes, for it is not a very curious place. After seeing these things we returned by moonlight to Naples in our boat. What colours there were in the sky, what radiance in the evening star, and how the moon was encompassed by a light unknown to our regions!

Our next excursion was to Vesuvius. We went to Resina in a carriage, where Mary and I mounted mules, and Claire was carried in a chair on the shoulders of four men, much like a member of parliament after he has gained his election, and looking, with less reason, quite as frightened. So we arrived at the hermitage of San Salvador, where an old hermit, belted with rope, set forth the plates for our refreshment.

Vesuvius is, after the glaciers, the most impressive exhibition of the energies of nature I ever saw. It has not the immeasurable greatness, the overpowering magnificence, nor, above all, the radiant beauty of the glaciers; but it has all their character of tremendous

[1] So in all editions; but perhaps we should read *by* for *of*.

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and irresistible strength. From Resina to the hermitage you wind up the mountain, and cross a vast stream of hardened lava, which is an actual image of the waves of the sea, changed into hard black stone by inchantment. The lines of the boiling flood seem to hang in the air, and it is difficult to believe that the billows which seem hurrying down upon you are not actually in motion. This plain was once a sea of liquid fire. From the hermitage we crossed another vast stream of lava, and then went on foot up the cone—this is the only part of the ascent in which there is any difficulty, and that difficulty has been much exaggerated. It is composed of rocks of lava, and declivities of ashes; by ascending the former and descending the latter, there is very little fatigue. On the summit is a kind of irregular plain, the most horrible chaos that can be imagined; riven into ghastly chasms, and heaped up with tumuli of great stones and cinders, and enormous rocks blackened and calcined, which had been thrown from the volcano upon one another in terrible confusion. In the midst stands the conical hill from which volumes of smoke, and the fountains of liquid fire, are rolled forth forever. The mountain is at present in a slight state of eruption; and a thick heavy white smoke is perpetually rolled out, interrupted by enormous columns of an impenetrable black bituminous vapour, which is hurled up, fold after fold, into the sky with a deep hollow sound, and fiery stones are rained down from its darkness, and a black shower of ashes fell even where we sat. The lava, like the glacier, creeps on perpetually, with a crackling sound as of suppressed fire. There are several springs of lava; and in one place it gushes precipitously over a high crag, rolling down the half-molten rocks and its own over-

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hanging waves; a cataract of quivering fire. We approached the extremity of one of the rivers of lava; it is about twenty feet in breadth and ten in height; and as the inclined plane was not rapid, its motion was very slow. We saw the masses of its dark exterior surface detach themselves as it moved, and betray the depth of the liquid flame. In the day the fire is but slightly seen; you only observe a tremulous motion in the air, and streams and fountains of white sulphurous smoke.

At length we saw the sun sink between Capreæ and Inarime, and, as the darkness increased, the effect of the fire became more beautiful. We were, as it were, surrounded by streams and cataracts of the red and radiant fire; and in the midst, from the column of bituminous smoke shot up into the air, fell the vast masses of rock, white with the light of their intense heat, leaving behind them through the dark vapour trains of splendour. We descended by torch-light, and I should have enjoyed the scenery on my return, but they conducted me, I know not how, to the hermitage in a state of intense bodily suffering, the worst effect of which was spoiling the pleasure of Mary and Claire. Our guides on the occasion were complete savages. You have no idea of the horrible cries which they suddenly utter, no one knows why, the clamour, the vociferation, the tumult. Claire in her palanquin suffered most from it; and when I had gone on before, they threatened to leave her in the middle of the road, which they would have done had not my Italian servant promised them a beating, after which they became quiet. Nothing, however, can be more picturesque than the gestures and the physiognomies of these savage people. And when, in the darkness of night, they unexpectedly begin to sing in chorus some fragments

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of their wild but sweet national music, the effect is exceedingly fine.

Since I wrote this I have seen the museum of this city. Such statues! There is a Venus; an ideal shape of the most winning loveliness. A Bacchus, more sublime than any living being. A Satyr, making love to a youth, in which the expressed life of the sculpture, and the inconceivable beauty of the form of the youth, overcome one's repugnance to the subject. There are multitudes of wonderfully fine statues found in Herculaneum and Pompeii. We are going to see Pompeii the first day that the sea is waveless. Herculaneum is almost filled up; no more excavations are made; the king bought the ground and built a palace upon it.

You don't see much of Hunt. I wish you could contrive to see him when you go to town, and ask him what he means to answer to Lord Byron's invitation. He has now an opportunity, if he likes, of seeing Italy. What do you think of joining his party, and paying us a visit next year; I mean as soon as the reign of winter is dissolved? Write to me your thoughts upon this. I cannot express to you the pleasure it would give me to welcome such a party.

I have depression enough of spirits and not good health, though I believe the warm air of Naples does me good. We see absolutely no one here.

Adieu, my dear Peacock,

affectionately your friend,

P. B. S.

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LETTER XVIII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Naples, Jan. 26th, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

Your two letters arrived within a few days of each other, one being directed to Naples, and the other to Livorno. They are more welcome visitors to me than mine can be to you. I writing as from sepulchres, you from the habitations of men yet unburied; though the sexton, Castlereagh, after having dug their grave, stands with his spade in his hand, evidently doubting whether he will not be forced to occupy it himself. Your news about the bank-note trials is excellent good. Do I not recognize in it the influence of Cobbett? You don't tell me what occupies Parliament? I know you will laugh at my demand, and assure me that it is indifferent. Your pamphlet I want exceedingly to see. Your calculations in the letter are clear, but require much oral explanation. You know I am an infernal arithmetician. If none but me had contemplated "lucentemque globum lunæ, Titaniaque astra," the world would yet have doubted whether they were many hundred feet higher than the mountain tops.

In my accounts of pictures and things, I am more pleased to interest you than the many; and this is fortunate, because, in the first place, I have no idea of attempting the latter, and if I did attempt it, I should assuredly fail. A perception of the beautiful charac-

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terizes those who differ from ordinary men, and those who can perceive it would not buy enough to pay the printer. Besides, I keep no journal, and the only records of my voyage will be the letters I send you. The bodily fatigue of standing for hours in galleries exhausts me; I believe that I don't see half that I ought, on that account. And then we know nobody, and the common Italians are so sullen and stupid, it's impossible to get information from them. At Rome, where the people seem superior to any in Italy, I cannot fail to stumble on something more. O, if I had health, and strength, and equal spirits, what boundless intellectual improvement might I not gather in this wonderful country! At present I write little else but poetry, and little of that. My first act of Prometheus is complete, and I think you would like it. I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science, and if I were well, certainly I would aspire to the latter, for I can conceive a great work, embodying the discoveries of all ages, and harmonizing the contending creeds by which mankind have been ruled. Far from me is such an attempt, and I shall be content, by exercising my fancy, to amuse myself, and perhaps some others, and cast what weight I can into the scale of that balance, which the Giant of Arthegall holds.[1]

[1] On this passage Peacock remarks (*Fraser's Magazine*, March, 1860, p. 319), as follows: "The allusion is to the *Fairy Queen*, book v. canto 3. The Giant has scales, in which he professes to weigh right and wrong and rectify the physical and moral evils which result from inequality of condition. Shelley once pointed out this passage to me, observing, 'Artegall argues with the Giant; the Giant has the best of the argument; Artegall's iron man knocks him over into the sea and drowns him. This is the usual way in which power deals with opinion.' I said, 'That was not the lesson which Spenser intended to convey.' 'Perhaps not,' he said; 'it is the lesson which he conveys to me. I am of the Giant's faction.'

"In the same feeling, with respect to Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, he held that the Enchanter in the first canto was a true philanthropist, and the Knight of Arts and Industry in the second an oligarchical impostor overthrowing truth by power."

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Since you last heard from me, we have been to see Pompeii, and are waiting now for the return of spring weather, to visit, first, Pæstum, and then the islands; after which we shall return to Rome. I was astonished at the remains of this city; I had no conception of anything so perfect yet remaining. My idea of the mode of its destruction was this:—First, an earthquake shattered it, and unroofed almost all its temples, and split its columns; then a rain of light, small pumice-stones fell; then torrents of boiling water, mixed with ashes, filled up all its crevices. A wide, flat hill, from which the city was excavated, is now covered by thick woods, and you see the tombs and the theatres, the temples and the houses, surrounded by the uninhabited wilderness. We entered the town from the side towards the sea, and first saw two theatres; one more magnificent than the other, strewn with the ruins of the white marble which formed their seats and cornices, wrought with deep, bold sculpture. In the front, between the stage and the seats is the circular space, occasionally occupied by the chorus. The stage is very narrow, but long, and divided from this space by a narrow inclosure parallel to it, I suppose for the orchestra. On each side are the consuls' boxes, and below, in the theatre at Herculaneum, were found two equestrian statues of admirable workmanship, occupying the same place as the great bronze lamps did at Drury Lane. The smallest of the theatres is said to have been comic, though I should doubt. From both you see, as you sit on the seats, a prospect of the most wonderful beauty.

You then pass through the ancient streets; they are very narrow, and the houses rather small, but all constructed on an admirable plan, especially for this climate.

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The rooms are built round a court, or sometimes two, according to the extent of the house. In the midst is a fountain, sometimes surrounded with a portico, supported on fluted columns of white stucco; the floor is paved with mosaic, sometimes wrought in imitation of vine leaves, sometimes in quaint figures, and more or less beautiful, according to the rank of the inhabitant. There were paintings on all, but most of them have been removed to decorate the royal museums. Little winged figures, and small ornaments of exquisite elegance, yet remain. There is an ideal life in the forms of these paintings of an incomparable loveliness, though most are evidently the work of very inferior artists. It seems as if, from the atmosphere of mental beauty which surrounded them, every human being caught a splendour not his own. In one house you see how the bed-rooms were managed;—a small sofa was built up, where the cushions were placed; two pictures, one representing Diana and Endymion, the other Venus and Mars, decorate the chamber; and a little niche, which contains the statue of a domestic god. The floor is composed of a rich mosaic of the rarest marbles, agate, jasper, and porphyry; it looks to the marble fountain and the snow-white columns, whose entablatures strew the floor of the portico they supported. The houses have only one story, and the apartments, though not large, are very lofty. A great advantage results from this, wholly unknown in our cities. The public buildings, whose ruins are now forests as it were of white fluted columns, and which then supported entablatures, loaded with sculptures, were seen on all sides over the roofs of the houses. This was the excellence of the ancients. Their private expenses were comparatively moderate; the dwelling of one of the chief senators

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of Pompeii is elegant indeed, and adorned with most beautiful specimens of art, but small. But their public buildings are everywhere marked by the bold and grand designs of an unsparing magnificence. In the little town of Pompeii, (it contained about twenty thousand inhabitants,) it is wonderful to see the number and the grandeur of their public buildings. Another advantage, too, is, that, in the present case, the glorious scenery around is not shut out, and that, unlike the inhabitants of the Cimmerian ravines of modern cities, the ancient Pompeians could contemplate the clouds and the lamps of heaven; could see the moon rise high behind Vesuvius, and the sun set in the sea, tremulous with an atmosphere of golden vapour, between Inarime and Misenum.

We next saw the temples. Of the temple of Æsculapius little remains but an altar of black stone, adorned with a cornice imitating the scales of a serpent. His statue, in terra-cotta, was found in the cell. The temple of Isis is more perfect. It is surrounded by a portico of fluted columns, and in the area around it are two altars, and many ceppi for statues; and a little chapel of white stucco, as hard as stone, of the most exquisite proportion; its panels are adorned with figures in bas-relief, slightly indicated, but of a workmanship the most delicate and perfect that can be conceived. They are Egyptian subjects, executed by a Greek artist, who has harmonized all the unnatural extravagances of the original conception into the supernatural loveliness of his country's genius. They scarcely touch the ground with their feet, and their wind-uplifted robes seem in the place of wings. The temple in the midst, raised on a high platform, and approached by steps, was decorated with exquisite paintings, some of which we saw in the museum

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at Portici. It is small, of the same materials as the chapel, with a pavement of mosaic, and fluted Ionic columns of white stucco, so white that it dazzles you to look at it.

Thence through other porticos and labyrinths of walls and columns, (for I cannot hope to detail everything to you,) we came to the Forum. This is a large square, surrounded by lofty porticos of fluted columns, some broken, some entire, their entablatures strewed under them. The temple of Jupiter, of Venus, and another temple, the Tribunal, and the Hall of Public Justice, with their forests of lofty columns, surround the Forum. Two pedestals or altars of an enormous size, (for, whether they supported equestrian statues, or were the altars of the temple of Venus, before which they stand, the guide could not tell,) occupy the lower end of the Forum. At the upper end, supported on an elevated platform, stands the temple of Jupiter. Under the colonnade of its portico we sate, and pulled out our oranges, and figs, and bread, and medlars, (sorry fare, you will say,) and rested to eat. Here was a magnificent spectacle. Above and between the multitudinous shafts of the sun-shining columns was seen the sea, reflecting the purple heaven of noon above it, and supporting, as it were, on its line the dark lofty mountains of Sorrento, of a blue inexpressibly deep, and tinged towards their summits with streaks of new-fallen snow. Between was one small green island. To the right was Capreæ, Inarime, Prochyta,[1] and Misenum. Behind was the single summit of Vesuvius, rolling forth volumes of thick white smoke, whose foam-like column was sometimes darted into the clear dark sky, and fell in little streaks along the wind. Between Vesuvius and the

[1] The classic name of *Procida*.

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nearer mountains, as through a chasm, was seen the main line of the loftiest Apennines, to the east. The day was radiant and warm. Every now and then we heard the subterranean thunder of Vesuvius; its distant deep peals seemed to shake the very air and light of day, which interpenetrated our frames, with the sullen and tremendous sound. This scene was what the Greeks beheld (Pompeii, you know, was a Greek city). They lived in harmony with nature; and the interstices of their incomparable columns were portals, as it were, to admit the spirit of beauty which animates this glorious universe to visit those whom it inspired. If such is Pompeii, what was Athens? What scene was exhibited from the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and the temples of Hercules, and Theseus, and the Winds? The islands and the Ægean sea, the mountains of Argolis, and the peaks of Pindus and Olympus, and the darkness of the Bœotian forests interspersed?

From the Forum we went to another public place; a triangular portico, half inclosing the ruins of an enormous temple. It is built on the edge of the hill overlooking the sea. ∧ That black point is the temple. In the apex of the triangle stands an altar and a fountain, and before the altar once stood the statue of the builder of the portico. Returning hence, and following the consular road, we came to the eastern gate of the city. The walls are of enormous strength, and inclose a space of three miles. On each side of the road beyond the gate are built the tombs. How unlike ours! They seem not so much hiding-places for that which must decay, as voluptuous chambers for immortal spirits. They are of marble, radiantly white; and two, especially beautiful, are loaded with exquisite bas-reliefs. On the

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stucco-wall that incloses them are little emblematic figures of a relief exceedingly low, of dead and dying animals, and little winged genii, and female forms bending in groups in some funeral office. The higher reliefs represent, one a nautical subject, and the other a Bacchanalian one. Within the cell stand the cinerary urns, sometimes one, sometimes more. It is said that paintings were found within; which are now, as has been everything moveable in Pompeii, removed, and scattered about in royal museums. These tombs were the most impressive things of all. The wild woods surround them on either side; and along the broad stones of the paved road which divides them, you hear the late leaves of autumn shiver and rustle in the stream of the inconstant wind, as it were, like the step of ghosts. The radiance and magnificence of these dwellings of the dead, the white freshness of the scarcely finished marble, the impassioned or imaginative life of the figures which adorn them, contrast strangely with the simplicity of the houses of those who were living when Vesuvius overwhelmed them.

I have forgotten the amphitheatre, which is of great magnitude, though much inferior to the Coliseum. I now understand why the Greeks were such great poets: and, above all, I can account, it seems to me, for the harmony, the unity, the perfection, the uniform excellence, of all their works of art. They lived in a perpetual commerce with external nature, and nourished themselves upon the spirit of its forms. Their theatres were all open to the mountains and the sky. Their columns, the ideal types of a sacred forest, with its roof of interwoven tracery, admitted the light and wind; the odour and the freshness of the country penetrated the cities. Their

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temples were mostly upaithric; and the flying clouds, the stars, or the deep sky, were seen above. O, but for that series of wretched wars which terminated in the Roman conquest of the world; but for the Christian religion, which put the finishing stroke on the ancient system; but for those changes that conducted Athens to its ruin,—to what an eminence might not humanity have arrived!

In a short time I hope to tell you something of the museum of this city.

You see how ill I follow the maxim of Horace, at least in its literal sense: "nil admirari"—which I should say, "prope res est una"—to prevent there ever being anything admirable in the world.[1] Fortunately Plato is of my opinion; and I had rather err with Plato than be right with Horace.

At this moment I have received your letter indicating that you are removing to London. I am very much interested in the subject of this change, and beg you would write me all the particulars of it. You will be able now to give me perhaps a closer insight into the politics of the times than was permitted you at Marlow. Of H—— I have a very slight opinion. There are rumours here of a revolution in Spain. A ship came in twelve days from Catalonia, and brought a report that the king was massacred; that eighteen thousand insurgents surrounded Madrid; but that before the popular party gained head enough seven thousand were murdered by the inquisition. Perhaps you know all by this time.

[1] Although the construction here is a little obscure, Shelley meant, no doubt, to say that, taking *admirari* in the opening verse of the sixth epistle of Book I in the sense of *to admire* instead of *to wonder at*, to admire nothing would secure, not happiness as Horace teaches, but the absence of anything to admire.

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The old king of Spain is dead here. Cobbett is a fine ὑμενοποιος—does his influence increase or diminish? What a pity that so powerful a genius should be combined with the most odious moral qualities.

We have reports here of a change in the English ministry—to what does it amount? for, besides my national interest in it, I am on the watch to vindicate my most sacred rights, invaded by the chancery court.

I suppose now we shall not see you in Italy this spring, whether Hunt comes or not. It's probable I shall hear nothing from him for some months, particularly if he does not come. Give me *ses nouvelles.*

I am under an English surgeon here, who says I have a disease of the liver, which he will cure. We keep horses, as this kind of exercise is absolutely essential to my health. Elise[1] has just married our Italian servant, and has quitted us; the man was a great rascal, and cheated enormously: this event was very much against our advice.

I have scarcely been out since I wrote last.

Adieu! yours most faithfully,

P. B. S.

[1] Mrs. Shelley says, "A Swiss girl whom we had engaged as nursery-maid two years before, at Geneva."

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LETTER XIX.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Naples, February 25th, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I am much interested to hear your progress in the object of your removal to London, especially as I hear from Horace Smith of the advantages attending it. There is no person in the world who would more sincerely rejoice in any good fortune that might befall you than I should.

We are on the point of quitting Naples for Rome. The scenery which surrounds this city is more delightful than any within the immediate reach of civilized man. I don't think I have mentioned to you the Lago d'Agnano and the Caccia d'Ischieri, and I have since seen what obscures those lovely forms in my memory. They are both the craters of extinguished volcanos, and Nature has thrown forth forests of oak and ilex, and spread mossy lawns and clear lakes over the dead or sleeping fire. The first is a scene of a wider and milder character, with soft sloping, wooded hills, and grassy declivities declining to the lake, and cultivated plains of vines woven upon poplar-trees, bounded by the theatre of hills. Innumerable wild water-birds, quite tame, inhabit this place. The other is a royal chace, is surrounded by steep and lofty hills, and only accessible through a wide gate of massy oak, from the vestibule of which the spectacle of precipitous hills, hemming in a narrow and

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circular vale, is suddenly disclosed. The hills are covered with thick woods of ilex, myrtle, and laurustinus; the polished leaves of the ilex, as they wave in their multitudes under the partial blasts which rush through the chasms of the vale, glitter above the dark masses of foliage below, like the white foam of waves upon a deep blue sea. The plain so surrounded is at most three miles in circumference. It is occupied partly by a lake, with bold shores wooded by evergreens, and interrupted by a sylvan promontory of the wild forest, whose mossy boughs overhang its expanse, of a silent and purple darkness, like an Italian midnight; and partly by the forest itself, of all gigantic trees, but the oak especially, whose jagged boughs, now leafless, are hoary with thick lichens, and loaded with the massy and deep foliage of the ivy. The effect of the dark eminences that surround this plain, seen through the boughs, is of an inchanting solemnity. (There we saw in one instance wild boars and a deer, and in another—a spectacle little suited to the antique and Latonian nature of the place—King Ferdinand in a winter inclosure, watching to shoot wild boars.) The underwood was principally evergreen, all lovely kinds of fern and furze; the cytisus, a delicate kind of furze with a pretty yellow blossom, the myrtle, and the myrica. The willow-trees had just begun to put forth their green and golden buds, and gleamed like points of lambent fire among the wintry forest. The Grotto del Cane, too, we saw, because other people see it; but would not allow the dog to be exhibited in torture for our curiosity. The poor little animals stood moving their tails in a slow and dismal manner, as if perfectly resigned to their condition—a cur-like emblem of voluntary servitude. The effect of

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the vapour, which extinguishes a torch, is to cause suffocation at last, through a process which makes the lungs feel as if they were torn by sharp points within. So a surgeon told us, who tried the experiment on himself.

There was a Greek city, sixty miles to the south of Naples, called Posidonia, now Pesto, where there still subsist three temples of Etruscan [1] architecture, still perfect. From this city we have just returned. The weather was most unfavourable for our expedition. After two months of cloudless serenity, it began raining cats and dogs. The first night we slept at Salerno, a large city situate in the recess of a deep bay; surrounded with stupendous mountains of the same name. A few miles from Torre del Greco we entered on the pass of the mountains, which is a line dividing the isthmus of those enormous piles of rock which compose the southern boundary of the Bay of Naples, and the northern one of that of Salerno. On one side is a lofty conical hill, crowned with the turrets of a ruined castle, and cut into platforms for cultivation; at least every ravine and glen, whose precipitous sides admitted of other vegetation but that of the rock-rooted ilex; on the other the ætherial snowy crags of an immense mountain, whose terrible lineaments were at intervals concealed or disclosed by volumes of dense clouds rolling under the tempest. Half a mile from this spot, between orange and lemon groves of a lovely village, suspended as it were on an amphitheatral precipice, whose golden globes contrasted with the white walls and dark green leaves which they almost outnumbered, shone the sea. A burst of the declining sunlight illumined it. The road led along the brink of the precipice, towards Salerno. Nothing could be more

[1] Peacock observes that the architecture is Doric.

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glorious than the scene. The immense mountains covered with the rare and divine vegetation of this climate, with many-folding vales, and deep dark recesses, which the fancy scarcely could penetrate, descended from their snowy summits precipitously to the sea. Before us was Salerno, built into a declining plain, between the mountains and the sea. Beyond, the other shore of sky-cleaving mountains, then dim with the mist of tempest. Underneath, from the base of the precipice where the road conducted, rocky promontories jutted into the sea, covered with olive and ilex woods, or with the ruined battlements of some Norman or Saracenic fortress. We slept at Salerno, and the next morning, before daybreak, proceeded to Posidonia. The night had been tempestuous, and our way lay by the sea sand. It was utterly dark, except when the long line of wave burst, with a sound like thunder, beneath the starless sky, and cast up a kind of mist of cold white lustre. When morning came, we found ourselves travelling in a wide desert plain, perpetually interrupted by wild irregular glens, and bounded on all sides by the Apennines and the sea. Sometimes it was covered with forest, sometimes dotted with underwood, or mere tufts of fern and furze, and the wintry dry tendrils of creeping plants. I have never, but in the Alps, seen an amphitheatre of mountains so magnificent. After travelling fifteen miles, we came to a river, the bridge of which had been broken, and which was so swollen that the ferry would not take the carriage across. We had, therefore, to walk seven miles of a muddy road, which led to the ancient city across the desolate Maremma. The air was scented with the sweet smell of violets of an extraordinary size and beauty. At length we saw the sublime and massy colonnades, skirting the

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horizon of the wilderness. We entered by the ancient gate, which is now no more than a chasm in the rock-like wall. Deeply sunk in the ground beside it were the ruins of a sepulchre, which the ancients were in the custom of building beside the public way. The first temple, which is the smallest, consists of an outer range of columns, quite perfect, and supporting a perfect architrave and two shattered frontispieces.[1] The proportions are extremely massy, and the architecture entirely unornamented and simple. These columns do not seem more than forty feet high,[2] but the perfect proportions diminish the apprehension of their magnitude; it seems as if inequality and irregularity of form were requisite to force on us the relative idea of greatness. The scene from between the columns of the temple consists on one side of the sea, to which the gentle hill on which it is built slopes, and on the other, of the grand amphitheatre of the loftiest Apennines, dark purple mountains, crowned with snow, and intersected there by long bars of hard and leaden-coloured cloud. The effect of the jagged outline of mountains, through groups of enormous columns on one side, and on the other the level horizon of the sea, is inexpressibly grand. The second temple is much larger, and also more perfect. Beside the outer range of columns, it contains an interior range of column above column, and the ruins of a wall which was the screen of the penetralia. With little diversity of ornament, the

[1] The three temples are amphiprostyle; that is, they have two prospects or fronts, each of six columns in the two first, and of nine in the Basilica. See Major's "Ruins of Paestum." 1768. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

[2] The height of the columns is respectively 18 feet 6 inches, and 28 feet 5 inches and 6½ lines, in the two first temples; and 21 feet 6 inches in the Basilica. This shows the justice of the remarks on the difference of real and apparent magnitude. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

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order of architecture is similar to that of the first temple. The columns in all are fluted, and built of a porous volcanic stone, which time has dyed with a rich and yellow colour. The columns are one-third larger, and like that of the first, diminish from the base to the capital, so that, but for the chastening effect of their admirable proportions, their magnitude would, from the delusion of perspective, seem greater, not less, than it is; though perhaps we ought to say, not that this symmetry diminishes your apprehension of their magnitude, but that it overpowers the idea of relative greatness, by establishing within itself a system of relations destructive of your idea of its relation with other objects, on which our ideas of size depend. The third temple is what they call a Basilica; three columns alone remain of the interior range; the exterior is perfect, but that the cornice and frieze in many places have fallen. This temple covers more ground than either of the others, but its columns are of an intermediate magnitude between those of the second and the first.

We only contemplated these sublime monuments for two hours, and of course could only bring away so imperfect a conception of them as is the shadow of some half-remembered dream.

The royal collection of paintings in this city is sufficiently miserable. Perhaps the most remarkable is the original studio by Michael Angelo, of the "Day of Judgment," which is painted in fresco on the Sixtine chapel of the Vatican. It is there so defaced as to be wholly indistinguishable. I cannot but think the genius of this artist highly overrated. He has not only no temperance, no modesty, no feeling for the just boundaries of art (and in these respects an admirable genius may err), but he

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has no sense of beauty, and to want this is to want the sense of the creative power of mind. What is terror without a contrast with, and a connexion with, loveliness? How well Dante understood this secret—Dante, with whom this artist has been so presumptuously compared! What a thing his "Moses" is; how distorted from all that is natural and majestic, only less monstrous and detestable than its historical prototype. In the picture to which I allude, God is leaning out of heaven, as it were eagerly enjoying the final scene of the infernal tragedy he set the Universe to act. The Holy Ghost, in the shape of a dove, is under Him. Under the Holy Ghost stands Jesus Christ, in an attitude of haranguing the assembly. This figure, which his subject, or rather the view which it became him to take of it, ought to have modelled of a calm, severe, awe-inspiring majesty, terrible yet lovely, is in the attitude of commonplace resentment. On one side of this figure are the elect; on the other, the host of heaven; they ought to have been what the Christians call *glorified bodies*, floating onward and radiant with that everlasting light (I speak in the spirit of their faith), which had consumed their mortal veil. They are in fact very ordinary people. Below is the ideal purgatory, I imagine, in mid-air, in the shapes of spirits, some of whom dæmons are dragging down, others falling as it were by their own weight, others half suspended in that Mahomet-coffin kind of attitude which most moderate Christians, I believe, expect to assume. Every step towards hell approximates to the region of the artist's exclusive power. There is great imagination in many of the situations of these unfortunate spirits. But hell and death are his real sphere. The bottom of the picture is divided by a lofty rock, in which there is a

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cavern whose entrance is thronged by devils, some coming in with spirits, some going out for prey. The blood-red light of the fiery abyss glows through their dark forms. On one side are the devils in all hideous forms, struggling with the damned, who have received their sentence at the redeemer's throne, and chained in all forms of agony by knotted serpents, and writhing on the crags in every variety of torture. On the other, are the dead coming out of their graves—horrible forms. Such is the famous "Day of Judgment" of Michael Angelo; a kind of *Titus Andronicus* in painting, but the author surely no Shakspeare. The other paintings are one or two of Raphael or his pupils, very sweet and lovely. A "Danaë," of Titian, a picture, the softest and most voluptuous form, with languid and uplifted eyes, and warm yet passive limbs. A "Maddelena," by Guido, with dark brown hair, and dark brown eyes, and an earnest, soft, melancholy look. And some excellent pictures, in point of execution, by Annibal Carracci. None others worth a second look. Of the gallery of statues I cannot speak. They require a volume, not a letter. Still less what can I do at Rome?

I have just seen the *Quarterly* for September (not from my own box). I suppose there is no chance now of your organizing a review. This is a great pity. The *Quarterly* is undoubtedly conducted with talent, great talent, and affords a dreadful preponderance against the cause of improvement. If a band of staunch reformers, resolute yet skilful infidels, were united in so close and constant a league[1] as that in which interest and fanaticism have bound the members of that literary coalition!

[1] "This," says Peacock, "was the idea which was subsequently intended to be carried out in the *Liberal*."

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Adieu. Address your next letter to Rome, whence you shall hear from me soon again. Mary and Clara unite with me in the very kindest remembrances.

Most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

A doctor here has been messing me, and I believe has done me an important benefit. One of his pretty schemes has been putting caustic on my side. You may guess how much quiet I have had since it was laid on. . . . . .

LETTER XX.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

. . . . .

Rome, March 23d, 1819.

My dear Peacock,

I wrote to you the day before our departure from Naples. We came by slow journeys, with our own horses, to Rome, resting one day at Mola di Gaeta, at the inn called Villa di Cicerone, from being built on the ruins of his Villa, whose immense substructions overhang the sea, and are scattered among the orange-groves. Nothing can be lovelier than the scene from the terraces of the inn. On one side precipitous mountains, whose bases slope into an inclined plane of olive and orange-copses—the latter forming, as it were, an emerald sky of leaves, starred with innumerable globes of their ripening fruit, whose rich splendour contrasted with the deep

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green foliage; on the other the sea—bounded on one side by the antique town of Gaeta, and the other by what appears to be an island, the promontory of Circe. From Gaeta to Terracina the whole scenery is of the most sublime character. At Terracina precipitous conical crags of immense height shoot into the sky and overhang the sea. At Albano we arrived again in sight of Rome. Arches after arches in unending lines stretching across the uninhabited wilderness, the blue defined line of the mountains seen between them; masses of nameless ruin standing like rocks out of the plain; and the plain itself, with its billowy and unequal surface, announced the neighbourhood of Rome. And what shall I say to you of Rome? If I speak of the inanimate ruins, the rude stones piled upon stones, which are the sepulchres of the fame of those who once arrayed them with the beauty which has faded, will you believe me insensible to the vital, the almost breathing creations of genius yet subsisting in their perfection? What has become, you will ask, of the Apollo, the Gladiator, the Venus of the Capitol? What of the Apollo di Belvedere, the Laocoön? What of Raphael and Guido? These things are best spoken of when the mind has drunk in the spirit of their forms; and little indeed can I, who must devote no more than a few months to the contemplation of them, hope to know or feel of their profound beauty.

I think I told you of the Coliseum, and its impressions on me on my first visit to this city. The next most considerable relic of antiquity, considered as a ruin, is the Thermæ of Caracalla. These consist of six enormous chambers, above 200 feet in height, and each inclosing a vast space like that of a field. There are, in addition, a number of towers and labyrinthine recesses, hidden and

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woven over by the wild growth of weeds and ivy. Never was any desolation more sublime and lovely. The perpendicular wall of ruin is cloven into steep ravines filled up with flowering shrubs, whose thick twisted roots are knotted in the rifts of the stones. At every step the aërial pinnacles of shattered stone group into new combinations of effect, and tower above the lofty yet level walls, as the distant mountains change their aspect to one travelling rapidly along the plain. The perpendicular walls resemble nothing more than that cliff of Bisham wood, that is overgrown with wood, and yet is stony and precipitous—you know the one I mean; not the chalk-pit, but the spot that has the pretty copse of fir-trees and privet-bushes at its base, and where H * * and I scrambled up, and you, to my infinite discontent, would go home. These walls surround green and level spaces of lawn, on which some elms have grown, and which are interspersed towards their skirts by masses of the fallen ruin, overtwined with the broad leaves of the creeping weeds. The blue sky canopies it, and is as the everlasting roof of these enormous halls.

But the most interesting effect remains. In one of the buttresses, that supports an immense and lofty arch, which "bridges the very winds of heaven," are the crumbling remains of an antique winding staircase, whose sides are open in many places to the precipice. This you ascend, and arrive on the summit of these piles. There grow on every side thick entangled wildernesses of myrtle, and the myrletus, and bay, and the flowering laurustinus, whose white blossoms are just developed, the wild fig, and a thousand nameless plants sown by the wandering winds. These woods are intersected on every side by paths, like sheep-tracks through the copse-wood

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of steep mountains, which wind to every part of the immense labyrinth. From the midst rise those pinnacles and masses, themselves like mountains, which have been seen from below. In one place you wind along a narrow strip of weed-grown ruin, on one side is the immensity of earth and sky, on the other a narrow chasm, which is bounded by an arch of enormous size, fringed by the many-coloured foliage and blossoms, and supporting a lofty and irregular pyramid, overgrown like itself with the all-prevailing vegetation. Around rise other crags and other peaks, all arrayed, and the deformity of their vast desolation softened down, by the undecaying investiture of nature. Come to Rome. It is a scene by which expression is overpowered; which words cannot convey. Still further, winding up one-half of the shattered pyramids, by the path through the blooming copse-wood, you come to a little mossy lawn, surrounded by the wild shrubs; it is overgrown with anemones, wall-flowers, and violets, whose stalks pierce the starry moss, and with radiant blue flowers, whose names I know not, and which scatter through the air the divinest odour, which, as you recline under the shade of the ruin, produces sensations of voluptuous faintness, like the combinations of sweet music. The paths still wind on, threading the perplexed windings, other labyrinths, other lawns, and deep dells of wood, and lofty rocks, and terrific chasms. When I tell you that these ruins cover several acres, and that the paths above penetrate at least half their extent, your imagination will fill up all that I am unable to express of this astonishing scene.

I speak of these things not in the order in which I visited them, but in that of the impression which they made on me, or perhaps chance directs. The ruins of

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the ancient Forum are so far fortunate that they have not been walled up in the modern city. They stand in an open, lonesome place, bounded on one side by the modern city, and the other by the Palatine Mount, covered with shapeless masses of ruin. The tourists tell you all about these things, and I am afraid of stumbling on their language when I enumerate what is so well known. There remain eight granite columns of the Ionic order, with their entablature, of the temple of Concord, founded by Camillus. I fear that the immense expense demanded by these columns forbids us to hope that they are the remains of any edifice dedicated by that most perfect and virtuous of men. It is supposed to have been repaired under the Eastern Emperors; alas, what a contrast of recollections! Near them stand three Corinthian fluted columns, which supported the angle of a temple; the architrave and entablature are worked with delicate sculpture. Beyond, to the south, is another solitary column; and still more distant, three more, supporting the wreck of an entablature. Descending from the Capitol to the Forum, is the triumphal arch of Septimius Severus, less perfect than that of Constantine, though from its proportions and magnitude, a most impressive monument. That of Constantine, or rather of Titus, (for the relief and sculpture, and even the colossal images of Dacian captives, were torn by a decree of the senate from an arch dedicated to the latter, to adorn that of this stupid and wicked monster, Constantine, one of whose chief merits consists in establishing a religion, the destroyer of those arts which would have rendered so base a spoliation unnecessary) is the most perfect. It is an admirable work of art. It is built of the finest marble, and the outline of the reliefs is in many parts as

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perfect as if just finished. Four Corinthian fluted columns support, on each side, a bold entablature, whose bases are loaded with reliefs of captives in every attitude of humiliation and slavery. The compartments above express in bolder relief the enjoyment of success; the conqueror on his throne, or in his chariot, or nodding over the crushed multitudes, who writhe under his horses' hoofs, as those below express the torture and abjectness of defeat. There are three arches, whose roofs are pannelled with fretwork, and their sides adorned with similar reliefs. The keystone of these arches is supported each by two winged figures of Victory, whose hair floats on the wind of their own speed, and whose arms are outstretched, bearing trophies, as if impatient to meet. They look, as it were, borne from the subject extremities of the earth, on the breath which is the exhalation of that battle and desolation, which it is their mission to commemorate. Never were monuments so completely fitted to the purpose for which they were designed, of expressing that mixture of energy and error which is called a triumph.

I walk forth in the purple and golden light of an Italian evening, and return by star or moonlight, through this scene. The elms are just budding, and the warm spring winds bring unknown odours, all sweet, from the country. I see the radiant Orion through the mighty columns of the temple of Concord, and the mellow fading light softens down the modern buildings of the Capitol, the only ones that interfere with the sublime desolation of the scene. On the steps of the Capitol itself, stand two colossal statues of Castor and Pollux, each with his horse, finely executed, though far inferior to those of Monte Cavallo, the cast of one of which you

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know we saw together in London. This walk is close to our lodging, and this is my evening walk.

What shall I say of the modern city? Rome is yet the capital of the world. It is a city of palaces and temples, more glorious than those which any other city contains, and of ruins more glorious than they. Seen from any of the eminences that surround it, it exhibits domes beyond domes, and palaces, and colonnades interminably, even to the horizon; interspersed with patches of desert, and mighty ruins which stand girt by their own desolation, in the midst of the fanes of living religions and the habitations of living men, in sublime loneliness. St. Peter's is, as you have heard, the loftiest building in Europe. Externally it is inferior in architectural beauty to St. Paul's, though not wholly devoid of it; internally it exhibits littleness on a large scale, and is in every respect opposed to antique taste. You know my propensity to admire; and I tried to persuade myself out of this opinion—in vain; the more I see of the interior of St. Peter's, the less impression as a whole does it produce on me. I cannot even think it lofty, though its dome is considerably higher than any hill within fifty miles of London; and when one reflects, it is an astonishing monument of the daring energy of man. Its colonnade is wonderfully fine, and there are two fountains, which rise in spire-like columns of water to an immense height in the sky, and falling on the porphyry vases from which they spring, fill the whole air with a radiant mist, which at noon is thronged with innumerable rainbows. In the midst stands an obelisk. In front is the palace-like façade of St. Peter's, certainly magnificent; and there is produced, on the whole, an architectural combination unequalled in the world. But

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the dome of the temple is concealed, except at a very great distance, by the façade and the inferior part of the building, and that diabolical contrivance they call an attic.

The effect of the Pantheon is totally the reverse of that of St. Peter's. Though not a fourth part of the size, it is, as it were, the visible image of the universe; in the perfection of its proportions, as when you regard the unmeasured dome of heaven, the idea of magnitude is swallowed up and lost. It is open to the sky, and its wide dome is lighted by the ever-changing illumination of the air. The clouds of noon fly over it, and at night the keen stars are seen through the azure darkness, hanging immoveably, or driving after the driving moon among the clouds. We visited it by moonlight; it is supported by sixteen columns, fluted and Corinthian, of a certain rare and beautiful yellow marble, exquisitely polished, called here *giallo antico*. Above these are the niches for the statues of the twelve gods. This is the only defect of this sublime temple; there ought to have been no interval between the commencement of the dome and the cornice, supported by the columns. Thus there would have been no diversion from the magnificent simplicity of its form. This improvement is alone wanting to have completed the unity of the idea.

The fountains of Rome are, in themselves, magnificent combinations of art, such as alone it were worth coming to see. That in the Piazza Navona, a large square, is composed of enormous fragments of rock, piled on each other, and penetrated, as by caverns. This mass supports an Egyptian obelisk of immense height. On the four corners of the rock recline, in different attitudes, colossal figures representing the four divisions of the globe. The water bursts from the crevices beneath them. They are

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sculptured with great spirit; one impatiently tearing a veil from his eyes; another with his hands stretched upwards. The Fontana di Trevi is the most celebrated, and is rather a waterfall than a fountain; gushing out from masses of rock, with a gigantic figure of Neptune; and below are two river gods, checking two winged horses, struggling up from among the rocks and waters. The whole is not ill-conceived nor executed; but you know not how delicate the imagination becomes by dieting with antiquity day after day. The only things that sustain the comparison are Raphael, Guido, and Salvator Rosa.

The fountain on the Quirinal, or rather the group formed by the statues, obelisk and the fountain, is, however, the most admirable of all. From the Piazza Quirinale, or rather Monte Cavallo, you see the boundless ocean of domes, spires, and columns, which is the City, Rome. On a pedestal of white marble rises an obelisk of red granite, piercing the blue sky. Before it is a vast basin of porphyry, in the midst of which rises a column of the purest water, which collects into itself all the overhanging colours of the sky, and breaks them into a thousand prismatic hues and graduated shadows—they fall together with its dashing water-drops into the outer basin. The elevated situation of this fountain produces, I imagine, this effect of colour. On each side, on an elevated pedestal, stand the statues of Castor and Pollux, each in the act of taming his horse, which are said, but I believe wholly without authority, to be the work of Phidias and Praxiteles. These figures combine the irresistible energy with the sublime and perfect loveliness supposed to have belonged to their divine nature. The reins no longer exist, but the position of their hands and the sustained and calm command of their regard, seem

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to require no mechanical aid to enforce obedience. The countenances at so great a height are scarcely visible, and I have a better idea of that of which we saw a cast together in London, than of the other. But the sublime and living majesty of their limbs and mien, the nervous and fiery animation of the horses they restrain, seen in the blue sky of Italy, and overlooking the city of Rome, surrounded by the light and the music of that crystalline fountain, no cast can communicate.

These figures were found at the Baths of Constantine, but, of course, are of remote antiquity. I do not acquiesce however in the practice of attributing to Phidias, or Praxiteles, or Scopas, or some great master, any admirable work that may be found. We find little of what remained, and perhaps the works of these were such as greatly surpassed all that we conceive of most perfect and admirable in what little has escaped the *deluge*. If I am too jealous of the honour of the Greeks, our masters, and creators, the gods whom we should worship —pardon me.

I have said what I feel without entering into any critical discussions of the *ruins* of Rome, and the mere outside of this inexhaustible mine of thought and feeling. Hobhouse, Eustace, and Forsyth, will tell all the shew-knowledge about it—"the common stuff of the earth." By-the-bye, Forsyth[1] is worth reading, as I judge from a chapter or two I have seen. I cannot get the book here.

I ought to have observed that the central arch of the triumphal arch of Titus yet subsists, more perfect in its proportions, they say, than any of a later date. This I did not remark. The figures of Victory, with unfolded

[1] Presumably Forsyth's *Antiquities, Arts, &c., of Italy*.

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wings, and each spurning back a globe with outstretched feet, are, perhaps, more beautiful than those on either of the others. Their lips are parted: a delicate mode of indicating the fervour of their desire to arrive at the destined resting-place, and to express the eager respiration of their speed. Indeed, so essential to beauty were the forms expressive of the exercise of the imagination and the affections considered by *Greek* artists, that no ideal figure of antiquity, not destined to some representation directly exclusive of such a character, is to be found with closed lips. Within this arch are two panelled alto relievos, one representing a train of people bearing in procession the instruments of Jewish worship, among which is the holy candlestick with seven branches; on the other, Titus standing in a quadriga, with a winged Victory. The grouping of the horses, and the beauty, correctness and energy of their delineation, is remarkable, though they are much destroyed.[1]

[1] Another description of this arch occurs among the Notes on Sculptures. See Vol. III, p. 43. In Mrs. Shelley's editions that description is inserted as a note to this letter to Peacock.

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LETTER XXI.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Rome, April 6th 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I sent you yesterday a long letter, all about antique Romè, which you had better keep for some leisure day. I received yours, and one of Hunt's, yesterday.—So, you know the B——s?[1] I could not help considering Mrs. B., when I knew her, as the most admirable specimen of a human being I had ever seen. Nothing earthly ever appeared to me more perfect than her character and manners. It is improbable that I shall ever meet again the person whom I so much esteemed, and still admire. I wish, however, that when you see her, you would tell her that I have not forgotten her, nor any of the amiable circle once assembled round her; and that I desired such remembrances to her, as an exile and a *Pariah* may be permitted to address to an acknowledged member of the community of mankind. I hear they dined at your lodgings. But no mention of A * * * and his wife—where were they? C * * *, though so young when I saw her, gave indications of her mother's excellencies; and, certainly less fascinating, is, I doubt not, equally amiable, and more sincere. It was hardly possible for a person of the extreme subtlety and delicacy of Mrs. B——'s understanding and affections, to be quite sincere and constant.

[1] *Boinville* is probably the omitted name; but I have not seen the original letter. *C.*, lower down, I suppose stands for *Cornelia*.

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I am all anxiety about your I[ndia] H[ouse] affair. There are few who will feel more hearty satisfaction at your success, in this or any other enterprise, than I shall. Pray let me have the earliest intelligence.

When shall I return to England? The Pythia has ascended the tripod, but she replies not. Our present plans—and I know not what can induce us to alter them—lead us back to Naples in a month or six weeks, where it is almost decided that we should remain until the commencement of 1820. You may imagine when we receive such letters as yours and Hunt's what this resolution costs us—but these are not our only communications from England. My health is materially better. My spirits not the most brilliant in the world; but that we attribute to our solitary situation, and, though happy, how should I be lively? We see something of Italian society indeed. The Romans please me much, especially the women; who, though totally devoid of every kind of information, or culture of the imagination, or affections, or understanding—and, in this respect, a kind of gentle savages—yet contrive to be interesting. Their extreme innocence and naïveté, the freedom and gentleness of their manners; the total absence of affectation, makes an intercourse with them very like an intercourse with uncorrupted children, whom they resemble in loveliness as well as simplicity. I have seen two women in society here of the highest beauty; their brows and lips, and the moulding of the face modelled with sculptural exactness, and the dark luxuriance of their hair floating over their fine complexions—and the lips—you must hear the common-places which escape from them before they cease to be dangerous. The only inferior part are the eyes, which, though good and gentle, want the mazy

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depth of colour behind colour, with which the intellectual women of England and Germany entangle the heart in soul-inwoven labyrinths.

This is holy week, and Rome is quite full. The Emperor of Austria is here, and Maria Louisa is coming. On their journey through the other cities of Italy, she was greeted with loud acclamations, and vivas of Napoleon. Idiots and slaves! Like the frogs in the fable, because they are discontented with the log, they call upon the stork, who devours them. Great festas, and magnificent funzioni here—we cannot get tickets to all. There are five thousand strangers in Rome, and only room for five hundred, at the celebration of the famous Miserere, in the Sixtine chapel, the only thing I regret we shall not be present at. After all, Rome is eternal, and were all that *is* extinguished, that which *has been*, the ruins and the sculptures, would remain, and Raphael and Guido be alone regretted.

In the square of St. Peter's there are about three hundred fettered criminals at work, hoeing out the weeds that grow between the stones of the pavement. Their legs are heavily ironed, and some are chained two by two. They sit in long rows, hoeing out the weeds, dressed in parti-coloured clothes. Near them sit or saunter, groups of soldiers, armed with loaded muskets. The iron discord of those innumerable chains clanks up into the sonorous air, and produces, contrasted with the musical dashing of the fountains, and the deep azure beauty of the sky, and the magnificence of the architecture around, a conflict of sensations allied to madness. It is the emblem of Italy—moral degradation contrasted with the glory of nature and the arts.

We see no English society here; it is not probable

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that we could if we desired it, and I am certain that we should find it insupportable. The manners of the rich English are wholly insupportable, and they assume pretensions which they would not venture upon in their own country.—I am yet ignorant of the event of Hobhouse's election. I saw the last numbers were—Lamb, 4,200; and Hobhouse, 3,900—14th day. There is little hope. That mischievous Cobbett has divided and weakened the interest of the popular party, so that the factions that prey upon our country have been able to coalesce to its exclusion. The N——s[1] you have not seen. I am curious to know what kind of a girl Octavia becomes; she promised well. Tell H—— his Melpomene is in the Vatican, and that her attitude and drapery surpass, if possible, the graces of her countenance.

My "Prometheus Unbound" is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts. By-the-bye, have you seen Ollier? I never hear from him, and am ignorant whether some verses I sent him from Naples, entitled, I think, "Lines on the Euganean hills," have reached him in safety or not. As to the Reviews, I suppose there is nothing but abuse; and this is not hearty or sincere enough to amuse me. As to the poem now printing,[2] I lay no stress on it one way or the other. The concluding lines are natural.

I believe, my dear Peacock, that you wish us to come back to England. How is it possible? Health, competence, tranquillity—all these Italy permits, and Eng-

[1] Perhaps the Newtons, of vegetarian fame. See Shelley's *Vindication of Natural Diet* and the notes to it, in Vol. II.

[2] *Rosalind and Helen.*

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land takes away. I am regarded by all who know or hear of me, except, I think, on the whole, five individuals, as a rare prodigy of crime and pollution, whose look even might infect. This is a large computation, and I don't think I could mention more than three. Such is the spirit of the English abroad as well as at home.[1]

Few compensate, indeed, for all the rest, and if I were *alone* I should laugh; or if I were rich enough to do all things, which I shall never be. Pity me for my absence from those social enjoyments which England might afford me, and which I know so well how to appreciate. Still, I shall return some fine morning, out of pure weakness of heart.

My dear Peacock, most faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] On this passage Mrs. Shelley observes—"These expressions show how keenly Shelley felt the calumnies heaped on him during his life. The very exaggeration of which he is guilty, is a clue to much of his despondency. His seclusion from society resulted greatly from his extreme ill health, and his dislike of strangers and numbers, as well as the system of domestic economy which his lavish benevolence forced us to restrict within narrow bounds. In justice to our countrymen, I must mention that several distinguished for intellectual eminence, among them Frederic, Earl of Guildford, and Sir William Drummond, called on him at Rome. Accident at the time prevented him from cultivating their acquaintance—the death of our son, and our subsequent retirement at Pisa, shut us out still more from the world. I confess that the insolence of some of the more vulgar among the travelling English, rendered me anxious that Shelley should be more willing to extend his acquaintance among the better sort, but his health was an insuperable bar."

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LETTER XXII.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE

(Leghorn).

Rome, April 6th, 1819.

My dear Friends,

A combination of circumstances, which Mary will explain to you, leads us back to Naples in June, or rather the end of May, where we shall remain until the ensuing winter. We shall take a house at Portici, or Castel a Mare, until late in the autumn.

The object of this letter is to ask you to spend this period with us. There is no society which we have regretted or desired so much as yours, and in our solitude the benefit of your concession would be greater than I can express. What is a sail to Naples? It is the season of tranquil weather and prosperous winds. If I knew the magic that lay in any given form of words, I would employ them to persuade; but I fear that all I can say is, as you know with truth, we desire that you would come—we wish to see you. You came to see Mary at Lucca, directly I had departed to Venice. It is not our custom, when we can help it, any more than it is yours, to divide our pleasures.

What shall I say to entice you? We shall have a piano, and some books, and—little else, beside ourselves. But what will be most inviting to you, you will give much, though you may receive but little, pleasure.

But whilst I write this with more desire than hope,

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yet some of that, perhaps the project may fall into your designs. It is intolerable to think of your being buried at Livorno. The success assured by Mr. Reveley's talents, requires another scene. You may have decided to take this summer to consider—and why not with us at Naples, rather than at Livorno?

I could address, with respect to Naples, the words of Polypheme in Theocritus, to all the friends I wish to see, and you especially:

Ἐξένθοις, Γαλάτεια, καὶ ἐξενθοῖσα λάθοιο,
Ὥσπερ ἐγὼ νῦν ὧδε καθήμενος, οἴκαδ' ἀπενθεῖν.[1]

Most sincerely yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] Translated thus in Mrs. Shelley's editions:—"Come, O Galatea; and having come, forget, as do I, now sitting here, to return home."

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LETTER XXIII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Rome, June 8th, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yesterday, after an illness of only a few days, my little William died. There was no hope from the moment of the attack. You will be kind enough to tell all my friends, so that I need not write to them. It is a great exertion to me to write this, and it seems to me as if, hunted by calamity as I have been, that I should never recover any cheerfulness again.

If the things Mary desired to be sent to Naples have not been shipped, send them to Livorno.

We leave this city for Livorno tomorrow morning, where we have written to take lodgings for a month. I will then write again.

Yours ever affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.

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LETTER XXIV.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Livorno, June ——[1], 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

Our melancholy journey finishes at this town, but we retrace our steps to Florence, where, as I imagine, we shall remain some months. O that I could return to England! How heavy a weight when misfortune is added to exile, and solitude, as if the measure were not full, heaped high on both. O that I could return to England! I hear you say, "Desire never fails to generate capacity." Ah, but that ever-present Malthus, Necessity, has convinced Desire that even though it generated capacity, its offspring must starve. Enough of melancholy! *Nightmare Abbey*, though no cure, is a palliative. I have just received the parcel which contained it, and at the same time the *Examiners*, by the way of Malta. I am delighted with *Nightmare Abbey*. I think Scythrop[2] a character admirably conceived and executed; and I know not how to praise sufficiently the lightness, chastity, and strength of the language of the whole. It perhaps exceeds all your works in this. The catastrophe is excellent. I suppose the moral is contained in what Falstaff says—"For God's sake, talk like

[1] Peacock conjectured the 20th or 21st, "the London postmark being July 6th."

[2] In the introduction to the letters published by Peacock in *Fraser's Magazine*, we are told that Shelley "took to himself the character of Scythrop," but not whether the author really had his friend in his mind when he created the character.

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a man of this world;" and yet, looking deeper into it, is not the misdirected enthusiasm of Scythrop what J. C. calls the "salt of the earth?" My friends the Gisbornes here admire and delight in it exceedingly. I think I told you that they (especially the lady) are people of high cultivation. She is a woman of profound accomplishments and the most refined taste.

Cobbett still more and more delights me, with all my horror of the sanguinary common-places of his creed. His design to overthrow bank notes by forgery is very comic. One of the volumes of Birkbeck interested me exceedingly. The letters I think stupid, but suppose that they are useful.

I do not, as usual, give you an account of my journey, for I had neither the health nor the spirit to take notes. My health was greatly improving, when watching and anxiety cast me into a relapse. The doctors (I put little faith in the best) tell me I must spend the winter in Africa or Spain. I shall of course prefer the latter, if I choose either.

Are you married, or why do I not hear from you? *That* were a good reason.

Mary and Claire unite with me in kindest remembrances to you, and in congratulations, if she exist, to the new married lady.

When shall I see you again?

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

Pray do not forget Mary's things.

I have not heard from you since the middle of April.

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LETTER XXV.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Livorno, July 6th, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have lost some letters, and, in all probability, at least one from you, as I can account in no other manner for not having heard from you since your letter dated March 26th. . . . . We have changed our design of going to Florence immediately, and are now established for three months in a little country house in a pretty verdant scene near Livorno.

I have a study here in a tower, something like Scythrop's, where I am just beginning to recover the faculties of reading and writing. My health, whenever no Libecchio blows, improves. From my tower I see the sea, with its islands, Gorgona, Capraja, Elba, and Corsica, on one side, and the Apennines on the other. Milly surprised us the other day by first discovering a comet, on which we have been speculating. She may "make a stir, like a great astronomer."[1]

The direct purpose of this letter, however, is to ask you about the box which I requested you to send to me to Naples. If it has been sent, let me intreat you (for really it is of the most serious consequence to us) to

[1] Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star:
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that make a mighty rout:
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower! I'll make a stir,
Like a great astronomer.
WORDSWORTH:
To the Small Celandine.

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write to me by return of post, stating the name of the ship, the bill of lading, &c., so that I may get it without difficulty. If it has not been sent, do me the favour to send it instantly, direct to Livorno. If you have not the time, you can ask Hogg. If you cannot get the things from Mrs. Hunt (a possible case), send those you were to buy, and the things from Furnival,[1] alone. You can add what books you think fit. The last parcel I have received from you is that of last September.

All good wishes, and many hopes that you have already that success on which there will be no congratulations more cordial than those you will receive from me.

Ever most sincerely yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I shall receive your letter, if written by return of post, in thirty days: a distance less formidable than Rome or Naples.

[1] A surgeon at Egham, in whom Shelley had great confidence. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

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LETTER XXVI.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Livorno, July, 1819.

My dear Peacock,

We still remain, and shall remain nearly two months longer, at Livorno. Our house is a melancholy one,[1] and only cheered by letters from England. I got your note, in which you speak of three letters having been sent to Naples, which I have written for. I have heard also from H——, who confirms the news of your success, an intelligence most grateful to me.

The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy, on the subject of a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I having attended simply to the impartial developement of such characters, as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a developement. I send you a translation of the Italian manuscript on which my play is founded, the chief subject of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt, as to whether it would succeed as an

[1] Mrs. Shelley says: "We had lost our eldest, and, at that time, only child, the preceding month at Rome."

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acting play, hangs entirely on the question, as to whether such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection; considering, first, that the facts are matter of history; and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it.

I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or no. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present, founding my hopes on this, that, as a composition, it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of "Remorse"; that the interest of its plot is incredibly greater and more real; and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you, that whatever else you do, you will, at least, favour me on this point. Indeed, this is essential, deeply essential, to its success. After it had been acted, and successfully, (could I hope such a thing,) I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

What I want you to do is, to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O'Neill, and it might even seem written for her, (God forbid that I should ever see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces,) and, in all respects, it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character, I confess, I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play—that is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor. I think you know some of the people of that theatre, or, at least, some one who knows them, and when

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you have read the play, you may say enough perhaps to induce them not to reject it without consideration—but of this, perhaps, if I may judge from the tragedies which they have accepted, there is no danger at any rate.

Write to me as soon as you can on this subject, because it is necessary that I should present it, or, if rejected by the theatre, print it this coming season; lest somebody else should get hold of it, as the story, which now exists only in manuscript, begins to be generally known among the English. The translation which I send you, is to be prefixed to the play, together with a print of Beatrice. I have a copy of her picture by Guido, now in the Colonna palace at Rome—the most beautiful creature you can conceive.

Of course, you will not shew the manuscript to any one—and write to me by return of post, at which time the play will be ready to be sent.

* * * * * *

I expect soon to write again, and it shall be a less selfish letter. As to Ollier, I don't know what has been published, or what has arrived at his hands.—My Prometheus, though ready, I do not send till I know more.

Ever yours, most faithfully,

P. B. S.

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LETTER XXVII.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Livorno, August 15th, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

How good of you to write to us so often, and such kind letters! But it is like lending to a beggar. What can I offer in return?

Though surrounded by suffering and disquietude, and latterly almost overcome by our strange misfortune,[1] I have not been idle. My Prometheus is finished, and I am also on the eve of completing another work,[2] totally different from any thing you might conjecture that I should write; of a more popular kind; and, if any thing of mine could deserve attention, of higher claims. "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, till thou approve the performance."

I send you a little poem[3] to give to Ollier for publication, but *without my name:* Peacock will correct the proofs. I wrote it with the idea of offering it to the Examiner, but I find it is too long. It was composed last year at Este: two of the characters you will recognize; the third is also in some degree a painting from nature, but, with respect to time and place, ideal. You will find the little piece, I think, in some degree consistent with your own ideas of the manner in which poetry ought to be written. I have employed a certain familiar style of language to express the actual way in which

[1] Leigh Hunt says "The taking away of his children by the Court of Chancery;" but Mrs. Shelley says "The sudden death of William Shelley, then our only child, which happened in Rome, 6th June, 1819."

[2] *The Cenci.*

[3] *Julian and Maddalo.*

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people talk with each other, whom education and a certain refinement of sentiment have placed above the use of vulgar idioms. I use the word *vulgar* in its most extensive sense: the vulgarity of rank and fashion is as gross in its way as that of poverty, and its cant terms equally expressive of base conceptions, and therefore equally unfit for poetry. Not that the familiar style is to be admitted in the treatment of a subject wholly ideal, or in that part of any subject which relates to common life, where the passion, exceeding a certain limit, touches the boundaries of that which is ideal. Strong passion expresses itself in metaphor, borrowed from objects alike remote or near, and casts over all the shadow of its own greatness. But what am I about? If my grandmother sucks eggs, was it I who taught her?

If *you* would really correct the proof, I need not trouble Peacock, who, I suppose, has enough. Can you take it as a compliment that I prefer to trouble you?

I do not particularly wish this poem to be known as mine; but, at all events, I would not put my name to it. I leave you to judge whether it is best to throw it into the fire, or to publish it. So much for self—*self*, that burr that will stick to one. Your kind expressions about my Eclogue[1] gave me great pleasure; indeed, my great stimulus in writing is to have the approbation of those who feel kindly towards me. The rest is mere duty. I am also delighted to hear that you think of us, and form fancies about us. We cannot yet come home.

* * * * * *

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] *Rosalind and Helen.*

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LETTER XXVIII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Livorno, August (probably 22nd), 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I ought first to say, that I have not yet received one of your letters from Naples; in Italy such things are difficult; but your present letter tells me all that I could desire to hear of your situation.

My employments are these: I awaken usually at seven; read half-an-hour; then get up; breakfast; after breakfast ascend *my tower*, and read or write until two. Then we dine. After dinner I read Dante with Mary, gossip a little, eat grapes and figs, sometimes walk, though seldom, and at half-past five pay a visit to Mrs. Gisborne, who reads Spanish with me until near seven. We then come for Mary, and stroll about till supper time. Mrs. Gisborne is a sufficiently amiable and very accomplished woman; she is δημοκρατικη and αθεη—how far she may be φιλανθρωπη I don't know, for she is the antipodes of enthusiasm. Her husband, a man with little thin lips, receding forehead, and a prodigious nose, is an [ ] bore. His nose is something quite Slawkenbergian[1]—it weighs on the imagination to look at it. It is that sort of nose which transforms all the g's its wearer utters into k's. It is a nose once seen never to be forgotten, and which requires the utmost stretch of Christian charity to forgive. I, you know, have a little turn-up nose;

[1] See *Tristram Shandy*.

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Hogg has a large hook one; but add them both together, square them, cube them, you will have but a faint idea of the nose to which I refer.

I most devoutly wish I were living near London. I do not think I shall settle so far off as Richmond; and to inhabit any intermediate spot on the Thames would be to expose myself to the river damps; not to mention that it is not much to my taste. My inclinations point to Hampstead; but I do not know whether I should not make up my mind to something more completely suburban. What are mountains, trees, heaths, or even the glorious and ever-beautiful sky, with such sunsets as I have seen at Hampstead, to friends? Social enjoyment, in some form or other, is the alpha and the omega of existence. All that I see in Italy—and from my tower window I now see the magnificent peaks of the Apennine half inclosing the plain—is nothing; it dwindles into smoke in the mind, when I think of some familiar forms of scenery, little perhaps in themselves, over which old remembrances have thrown a delightful colour. How we prize what we despised when present! So the ghosts of our dead associations rise and haunt us, in revenge for our having let them starve, and abandoned them to perish.

You don't tell me if you see the Boinvilles; nor are they included in the list of the *conviti* at the monthly symposium. I will attend it in imagination.

One thing, I own, I am curious about; and in the chance of the letters not coming from Naples, pray tell me. What is it you do at the India House? Hunt writes, and says you have got a *situation* in the India House: Hogg that you have an *honourable employment*: Godwin writes to Mary that you have got *so much or so much*: but nothing of what you do. The devil take these

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general terms. Not content with having driven all poetry out of the world, at length they make war on their own allies; nay, on their very parents, dry facts. If it had not been the age of generalities, any one of these people would have told me what you did.[1]

I have been much better these last three weeks. My work on the Cenci, which was done in two months, was a fine antidote to nervous medicines, and kept up, I think, the pain in my side, as sticks do a fire. Since then, I have materially improved. I do not walk enough. Clare, who is sometimes my companion, does not dress in exactly the right time. I have no stimulus to walk. Now, I go sometimes to Livorno on business; and that does me good.

England seems to be in a very disturbed state, if we may judge from some Paris papers. I suspect it is rather exaggerated; but when I hear them talk of paying in gold—nay I dare say take steps towards it, confess that the sinking fund is a fraud, &c., I no longer wonder. But the change should commence among the higher orders, or anarchy will only be the last flash before despotism. I wonder and tremble. You are well sheltered in the East India Company. No change could possibly touch you.

I have been reading Calderon in Spanish. A kind of Shakespeare is this Calderon; and I have some thoughts, if I find that I cannot do anything better, of translating some of his plays.

The *Examiners* I receive. Hunt, as a political writer,

[1] I did my best to satisfy his curiosity on this subject; but it was in letters to Naples, which he had left before they arrived, and he never received them. I observed that this was the case with the greater portion of the letters which arrived at any town in Italy after he had left it. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

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pleases me more and more. Adieu. Mary and Clare send their best remembrances.

Your most faithful friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Pray send me some books, and Clare would take it as a great favour if you would send her *music books.*

LETTER XXIX.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Livorno, September 3rd, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

At length has arrived Ollier's parcel, and with it the portrait. What a delightful present! It is almost yourself, and we sate talking with it, and of it, all the evening. . . . It is a great pleasure to us to possess it, a pleasure in time of need; coming to us when there are few others. How we wish it were you, and not your picture! How I wish we were with you!

This parcel, you know, and all its letters, are now a year old; some older. There are all kinds of dates, from March to August, 1818,[1] and "your date," to use Shakespeare's expression, "is better in a pie or a pudding, than in your letter."—"Virginity," Parolles says,—but letters are the same thing in another shape.[2]

With it came, too, Lamb's works. I have looked at none of the other books yet. What a lovely thing is his

[1] Mrs. Shelley omits the date of the year.

[2] See *All's Well that Ends Well,* Act I, Scene 1.

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"Rosamund Gray"! how much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest part of our nature in it! When I think of such a mind as Lamb's,—when I see how unnoticed remain things of such exquisite and complete perfection, what should I hope for myself, if I had not higher objects in view than fame?

I have seen too little of Italy and of pictures. Perhaps Peacock has shewn you some of my letters to him. But at Rome I was very ill, seldom able to go out without a carriage; and though I kept horses for two months there, yet there is so much to see! Perhaps I attended more to sculpture than painting,—its forms being more easily intelligible than those of the latter. Yet I saw the famous works of Raphael, whom I agree with the whole world in thinking the finest painter. Why, I can tell you another time.[1] With respect to Michael Angelo, I dissent, and think with astonishment and indignation on the common notion that he equals, and in some respects exceeds Raphael. He seems to me to have no sense of moral dignity and loveliness; and the energy for which he has been so much praised, appears to me to be a certain rude, external, mechanical quality, in comparison with anything possessed by Raphael; or even much inferior artists. His famous painting in the Sixtine chapel, seems to me deficient in beauty and majesty, both in the conception and the execution. He has been called the Dante of painting; but if we find some of the gross and strong outlines, which are employed in the most distasteful passages of the Inferno, where shall we find *your* Francesca,—where the spirit coming over the sea in a boat, like Mars rising from

[1] Mrs. Shelley omits this sentence; accidentally, I suppose.

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the vapours of the horizon—where Matilda gathering flowers, and all the exquisite tenderness, and sensibility, and ideal beauty, in which Dante excelled all poets except Shakespeare ?

As to Michael Angelo's *Moses*—but you have a cast of that in England.———I write these things, Heaven knows why !

I have written something and finished it, different from anything else, and a new attempt for me; and I mean to dedicate it to you.[1] I should not have done so without your approbation, but I asked your picture last night, and it smiled assent. If I did not think it in some degree worthy of you, I would not make you a public offering of it. I expect to have to write to you soon about it. If Ollier is not turned Christian, Jew, or become infected with *the Murrain* he will publish it. Don't let him be frightened, for it is nothing which by any courtesy of language can be termed either moral or immoral.

Mary has written to Marianne for a parcel, in which I beg you will make Ollier inclose what you know would most interest me,—your "Calendar," (a sweet extract from which I saw in the Examiner,) and the other poems belonging to you; and, for some friends of mine, my Eclogue. This parcel, which must be sent instantly, will reach me by October, but don't trust letters to it, except just a line or so. When you write, write by the post.

Ever your affectionate

P. B. S.

My love to Marianne and Bessy, and Thornton too,

[1] *The Cenci.*

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and Percy, &c., and if you could imagine any way in which I could be useful to them here, tell me. I will inquire about the Italian chalk. You have no idea of the pleasure this portrait gives us.

LETTER XXX.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Livorno, September 9th, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I send you the tragedy, addressed to Stamford Street, fearing lest it might be inconvenient to receive such bulky packets at the India House. You will see that the subject has not been treated as you suggested, and why it was not susceptible of such treatment. In fact, it was then already printing when I received your letter, and it has been treated in such a manner that I do not see how the subject forms an objection. You know *Œdipus* is performed on the fastidious French stage,[1] a play much more broad than this. I confess I have some hopes, and some friends here persuade me that they are not unfounded.

Many thanks for your attention in sending the papers which contain the terrible and important news of Man-

[1] The *Œdipus* of Dryden and Lee was often performed in the last century; but never in my time. There is no subject of this class treated with such infinite skill and delicacy as in Alfieri's beautiful tragedy, *Mirra*. It was the character in which Madame Ristori achieved her great success in Paris; but she was prohibited from performing it in London. If the Covent Garden managers had accepted the *Cenci*, I doubt if the licenser would have permitted the performance. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

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chester. These are, as it were, the distant thunders of the terrible storm which is approaching. The tyrants here, as in the French Revolution, have first shed blood. May their execrable lessons not be learnt with equal docility! I still think there will be no coming to close quarters until financial affairs bring the oppressors and the oppressed together. Pray let me have the *earliest* political news which you consider of importance at this crisis.

Yours ever most faithfully,

P. B. S.

I send this to the India House, the tragedy to Stamford Street.

LETTER XXXI.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Leghorn, September 21st, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

You will have received a short letter sent with the tragedy, and the tragedy itself by this time. I am, you may believe, anxious to hear what you think of it, and how the manager talks about it. I have printed in Italy 250 copies, because it costs, with all duties and freightage, about half what it would cost in London, and these copies will be sent by sea. My other reason was a belief that the seeing it in print would enable the people at the theatre to judge more easily. Since I last wrote to you, Mr. Gisborne is gone to England for the purpose of obtaining a situation for Henry Reveley. I have given him a letter to you, and you would oblige me by

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shewing him what civilities you can, and by forwarding his views, either by advice or recommendation, as you may find opportunity, not for his sake, who is a great bore, but for the sake of Mrs. Gisborne and Henry Reveley, people for whom we have a great esteem. Henry is a most amiable person, and has great talents as a mechanic and engineer. I have given him also a letter to Hunt, so that you will meet him there. This Mr. Gisborne is a man who knows I cannot tell how many languages, and has read almost all the books you can think of; but all that they contain seems to be to his mind what water is to a sieve. His liberal opinions are all the reflections of Mrs. Gisborne's, a very amiable, accomplished, and completely unprejudiced woman.

Charles Clairmont is now with us on his way to Vienna. He has spent a year or more in Spain, where he has learnt Spanish, and I make him read Spanish all day long. It is a most powerful and expressive language, and I have already learnt sufficient to read with great ease their poet Calderon. I have read about twelve of his plays. Some of them certainly deserve to be ranked amongst the grandest and most perfect productions of the human mind. He exceeds all modern dramatists, with the exception of Shakespeare, whom he resembles, however, in the depth of thought and subtlety of imagination of his writings, and in the rare power of interweaving delicate and powerful comic traits with the most tragical situations, without diminishing their interest. I rate him far above Beaumont and Fletcher.

I have received all the papers you sent me, and the *Examiners* regularly, perfumed with muriatic acid. What an infernal business this of Manchester! What is to be done? Something assuredly. H. Hunt has behaved,

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I think, with great spirit and coolness in the whole affair.

I have sent you my *Prometheus*, which I do not wish to be sent to Ollier for publication until I write to that effect. Mr. Gisborne will bring it, as also some volumes of Spenser, and the two last of Herodotus and *Paradise Lost*, which may be put with the others.

If my play should be accepted, don't you think it would excite some interest, and take off the unexpected horror of the story, by shewing that the events are real, if it could be made to appear in some paper in some form?

You will hear from me again shortly, as I send you by sea the *Cenci's* printed, which you will be good enough to keep. Adieu.

Yours most faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

LETTER XXXII.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Livorno, Sept. 27th, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We are now on the point of leaving this place for Florence, where we have taken pleasant apartments for six months, which brings us to the 1st of April; the season at which new flowers and new thoughts spring forth upon the earth and in the mind. What is then our destination is yet undecided. I have not yet seen Florence, except as one sees the outside of the streets; but its physiognomy indicates it to be a city, which, though the ghost of a republic, yet possesses most

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amiable qualities. I wish you could meet us there in the spring, and we would try to muster up a "lièta brigata," which, leaving behind them the pestilence of remembered misfortunes, might act over again the pleasures of the Interlocutors in Boccaccio. I have been lately reading this most divine writer. He is in a high sense of the word a poet, and his language has the rhythm and harmony of verse. I think him not equal certainly either to Dante or Petrarch, but far superior to Tasso and Ariosto, the children of a later and of a colder day. I consider the three first as the productions of the vigour of the infancy of a new nation—as rivulets from the same spring as that which fed the greatness of the republics of Florence and Pisa, and which checked the influence of the German emperors; and from which, through obscurer channels, Raphael and Michael Angelo drew the light and the harmony of their inspiration. When the second-rate poets of Italy wrote, the corrupting blight of tyranny was already hanging on every bud of genius. Energy and simplicity and unity of idea were no more. In vain do we seek in the finest[1] passages of Ariosto and Tasso, any expression which at all approaches in this respect to those of Dante and Petrarch. How much do I admire Boccaccio! What descriptions of nature are those[2] in his little introductions to every new day! It is the morning of life, stripped of that mist of familiarity which makes it obscure to us. Boccaccio seems to me to have possessed a deep sense of the fair ideal of human life, considered in its social relations. His more serious theories of love agree especially with mine. He often expresses things lightly too, which have serious meanings of a very

[1] Hunt reads *fine*. [2] Hunt reads *there*.

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beautiful kind. He is a moral casuist, the opposite of the Christian, stoical,[1] ready-made, and worldly system of morals. Do you remember one little remark, or rather maxim of his, which might do some good to the common narrow-minded conceptions of love,—"Bocca bacciata non perde ventura; anzi rinnuova, come fa la luna?"

We expect Mary to be confined towards the end of October. The birth of a child will probably retrieve her from some part of her present melancholy depression.

It would give me much pleasure to know Mr. Lloyd. Do you know, when I was in Cumberland, I got Southey to borrow a copy of Berkeley from him, and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, probably written by Lloyd,[2] which I thought particularly acute. One, especially, struck me as being the assertion of a doctrine, of which even then I had long been persuaded, and on which I had founded much of my persuasions, as regarded the imagined cause of the universe—"Mind cannot create, it can only perceive." Ask him if he remembers having written it. Of Lamb you know my opinion, and you can bear witness to the regret which I felt, when I learned that the calumny of an enemy had deprived me of his society whilst in England.—Ollier told me that the Quarterly are going to review me. I suppose it will be a pretty , and as I am acquiring a taste for humour and drollery, I confess I am curious to see it. I have sent my "Prometheus Unbound" to P.; if you ask him for it he will shew it you. I think it will please you.

[1] Hunt omits *Christian, stoical,* the close of this paragraph from *Do you, &c.,* the next paragraph, and the conclusion of the letter after *acute* in the next paragraph but one.

[2] Charles Lloyd, the friend and literary colleague of Lamb and Coleridge.

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Whilst I went to Florence, Mary wrote, but I did not see her letter.—Well, good b'ye. Next Monday I shall write to you from Florence. Love to all.

Most affectionately your friend,

P. B. S.

LETTER XXXIII.

To Mrs. GISBORNE.

Florence, October 13th or 14th, 1819.

My dear Friend,

The regret we feel at our absence from you persuades me that it is a state which cannot last, and which, so long as it must last, will be interrupted by some intervals, one of which is destined to be, your all coming to visit us here. Poor Oscar! I feel a kind of remorse to think of the unequal love with which two animated beings regard each other, when I experience no such sensations for him, as those which he manifested for us. His importunate regret is, however, a type of ours, as regards you. Our memory—if you will accept so humble a metaphor—is for ever scratching at the door of your absence.

About Henry and the steam-engine[1] I am in torture until this money comes from London, though I am sure that it will and must come; unless, indeed, my banker has broke, and then it will be my loss, not Henry's—a little

[1] Mrs. Shelley says, "Shelley set on foot the building of a steamboat, to ply between Marseilles, Genoa, and Leghorn. Such an enterprise promised fortune to his friend who undertook to build it, and the anticipation filled him with delight. Unfortunately, an unforeseen complication of circumstances caused the design to be abandoned, when already far advanced towards completion." Mrs. Shelley inserted a letter from Mrs. Gisborne, which explains some portion of this letter of Shelley's, and which will be found in the appendix.

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delay will mend the matter. I would then write instantly to London an effectual letter, and by return of post all would be set right—it would then be a thing easily set straight—but if it were not, you know me too well not to know that there is no personal suffering or degradation, or toil, or anything that can be named, with which I do not feel myself bound to support this enterprise of Henry. But all this rhodomontade only shews how correct Mr. Bielby's advice was about the discipline necessary for my imagination. No doubt that all will go on with mercantile and common-place exactness, and that you will be spared the suffering, and I the virtue, incident to some untoward event.

I am anxious to hear of Mr. Gisborne's return, and I anticipate the surprise and pleasure with which he will learn that a resolution has been taken which leaves you nothing to regret in that event. It is with unspeakable satisfaction that I reflect that my intreaties and persuasions overcame your scruples on this point, and that whatever advantage shall accrue from it will belong to you, whilst any reproach due to the imprudence of such an enterprise, must rest on me. I shall thus share the pleasure of success, and bear the blame and loss, (if such a thing were possible,) of a reverse; and what more can a man, who is a friend to another, desire for himself? Let us believe in a kind of optimism, in which we are our own gods. It is best that Mr. Gisborne should have returned; it is best that I should have over-persuaded you and Henry; it is best that you should all live together, without any more solitary attempts; it is best that this one attempt should have been made, otherwise, perhaps, one thing which is best might not have occurred; and it is best that we should think all this for the best, even

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though it is not; because Hope, as Coleridge says, is a solemn duty, which we owe alike to ourselves and to the world—a worship to the spirit of good within, which requires, before it sends that inspiration forth, which impresses its likeness upon all that it creates, devoted and disinterested homage.

A different scene is this from that in which you made the chief character of our changing drama. We see no one, as usual. Madame M * * *[1] is quiet, and we only meet her now and then, by chance. Her daughter, not so fair, but I fear as cold, as the snowy Florimel in Spenser, is in and out of love with Claire as the winds happen to blow; and Claire, who, at the moment I happen to write, is in a high state of transitory contentment, is setting off to Vienna in a day or two.

My £100, from what mistake remains to be explained, has not yet arrived, and the banker here is going to advance me £50, on my bill at three months—all additional facilitation, should any such be needed, for the steamboat. I have yet seen little of Florence. The gallery, I have a design of studying piece-meal; one of my chief objects in Italy being the observing in statuary and painting, the degree in which, and the rules according to which, that ideal beauty, of which we have so intense, yet so obscure an apprehension, is realized in external forms.

Adieu—I am anxious for Henry's first letter. Give to him, and take to yourself those sentiments, whatever they may be, with which you know that I cannot cease to regard you.

Most faithfully and affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

[1] Probably "Mrs. Mason" (Lady Mountcashel).

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I had forgotten to say that I should be very much obliged to you, if you would contrive to send the Cenci's, which are at the printer's, to England, by the next ship. I forgot it in the hurry of departure.—I have just heard from Peacock, saying that he don't think that my tragedy will do, and that he don't much like it. But I ought to say, to blunt the edge of his criticism, that he is a nursling of the exact and superficial school in poetry.

If Mr. G. is returned, send the "Prometheus" with them.

LETTER XXXIV.

To HENRY REVELEY.

Florence, Oct. 28, 1819.

MY DEAR HENRY,

So it seems *I* am to begin the correspondence, though I have more to ask than to tell.

You know our bargain; you are to write me *uncorrected* letters, just as the words come, so let me have them—I like coin from the mint—though it may be a little rough at the edges;—clipping is penal according to our statute.

In the first place listen to a reproach; you ought to have sent me an acknowledgment of my last billet. I am very happy to hear from Mr. Gisborne, and he knows well enough how to interest me himself, not to need to rob me of an occasion of hearing from you. Let you and I try if we cannot be as punctual and business-like

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as the best of them. But no clipping and coining, if you please.

Now take this that I say in a light just so serious as not to give you pain. In fact, my dear fellow, my motive in soliciting your correspondence, and that flowing from your own mind, and clothed in your own words, is, that you may begin to accustom to discipline yourself in the only practice of life in which you appear deficient. You know that you are writing to a person persuaded of all the confidence and respect due to your powers in those branches of science to which you have addicted yourself; and you will not permit a false shame with regard to the mere mechanical arrangement of words to over-balance the advantage arising from the free communication of ideas. Thus you will become day by day more skilful in the management of that instrument of their communication, on which the attainment of a person's just rank in society depends. Do not think me arrogant. There are subjects of the highest importance in which you are far better qualified to instruct me, than I am qualified to instruct you on this subject.

Well, how goes on all? The boilers, the keel of the boat, and the cylinder, and all the other elements of that soul which is to guide our "monstruo de fuego y agua" over the sea? Let me hear news of their birth, and how they thrive after they are born. And is the money arrived at Mr. Webb's? Send me an account of the number of crowns you realize; as I think we had better, since it is a transaction in this country, keep our accounts in money of this country.

We have rains enough to set the mills going, which are essential to your great iron bar. I suppose it is at present either made or making.

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My health is better so long as the scirocco blows, and, but for my daily expectation of Mary's confinement, I should have been half tempted to have come to see you. As it is, I shall wait till the boat is finished. On the subject of your actual and your expected progress, you will certainly allow me to hear from you.

Give my kindest regards to your mother and Mr. Gisborne—tell the latter, whose billet I have neglected to answer, that I did so, under the idea of addressing him in a post or two on a subject which gives me considerable anxiety about you all. I mean the continuance of your property in the British funds at this crisis of approaching revolution. It is the business of a friend to say what he thinks without fear of giving offence; and, if I were not a friend, argument is worth its market-price anywhere.[1]

Believe me, my dear Henry,

Your very faithful friend,

P. B. S.

[1] This letter seems to have been enclosed in the next. The subject of property in the funds will be found referred to in the letter of the 6th of November (p. 138), but not as Shelley meant to deal with it.

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LETTER XXXV.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Florence, Oct. 28, 1819.

My dear Friends,

I receive this morning the strange and unexpected news, that my bill of £200 has been returned to Mr. Webb protested. Ultimately this can be nothing but delay, as I have only drawn from my banker's hands so much as to leave them still in possession of £80, and this I positively know, and can prove by documents. By return of post, for I have not only written to my banker, but to private friends, no doubt Henry will be enabled to proceed. Let him meanwhile do all that can be done.

Meanwhile, to save time, could not money be obtained temporarily, at Livorno, from Mr. W——,[1] or Mr. G——, or any of your acquaintance, on my bills at three or six months, indorsed by Mr. Gisborne and Henry, so that he may go on with his work? If a month is of consequence, think of this.

Be of good cheer, Madonna mia, all will go well. The inclosed is for Henry, and was written before this news, as he will see; but it does not, strange as it is, abate one atom of my cheer.

Accept, dear Mr. Gisborne, my best regards.

Yours faithfully,

P. B. S.

[1] Perhaps *Webb*: see the last letter.

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LETTER XXXVI.[1]

To LEIGH HUNT.

Florence, Nov. 2, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You cannot but know how sensibly I feel your kind expressions concerning me in the third part of your observations on the *Quarterly;* I feel that it is from a friend. As to the perverse-hearted writer of those

[1] In first publishing this letter in the *Relics of Shelley*, Mr. Garnett inserted by way of note the "kind expressions concerning me in the third part of your observations on the *Quarterly*," which he found in the *Examiner* for the 10th of October, 1819. The passage is as follows:—"To return to Mr. Shelley. The Reviewer asserts that he 'is shamefully dissolute in his conduct.' We heard of similar assertions when we resided in the same house with Mr. Shelley for nearly three months; and how was he living all that time? As much like Plato himself, as all his theories resemble Plato—or rather, still more like a Pythagorean. This was the round of his daily life—he was up early; breakfasted sparingly; wrote this *Revolt of Islam* all the morning; went out in his boat, or into the woods with some Greek author or the Bible in his hands; came home to a dinner of vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine); visited, if necessary, the sick and fatherless, whom others gave Bibles to and no help; wrote or studied again, or read to his wife and friends the whole evening; took a crust of bread, or a glass of whey for his supper; and went early to bed. This is literally the whole of the life he led, or that we believe he now leads in Italy; nor have we ever known him, in spite of the malignant and ludicrous exaggerations on this point, deviate, notwithstanding his theories, even into a single action which those who differ with him might think blameable. We do not say that he would always square his conduct by their opinions as a matter of principle; we only say that he acted just as if he did so square it. We forbear, out of regard for the very bloom of their beauty, to touch upon numberless other charities and generosities which we have known him exercise; but this we must say, in general, that we never lived with a man who gave so complete an idea of an ardent and principled aspirant in philosophy as Percy Shelley, and that we believe him, from the bottom of our hearts, to be one of the noblest hearts as well as heads which the world has seen for a long time. We never met, in short, with a being who came nearer, perhaps so near, to that height of humanity mentioned in the conclusion of an essay of Lord Bacon's, where he speaks of excess of charity, and of its not being in the power of 'man or angel to come in danger by it.'"

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calumnies, I feel assured that it is Southey,[1] and the only notice which it becomes me to take of it, is to seek an occasion of personal expostulation with him on my return to England—not on the ground, however, of what he has written in the *Review*, but on another ground. As to anonymous criticism, it is a much fitter subject for merriment than serious comment; except, indeed, when the latter can be made a vehicle, as you have done, of the kindest friendship.

Now, I only send you a *very heroic* poem,[2] which I wish you to give to Ollier, and desire him to print and publish immediately, you being kind enough to take upon yourself the correction of the press—not, however, with my name; and you must tell Ollier that the author is to be kept a secret, and that I confide in him for this object as I would confide in a physician or lawyer, or any other man whose professional situation renders the betraying of what is entrusted a dishonour. My motive in this is solely not to prejudge myself in the present moment, as I have only expended a few days in this party squib, and, of course, taken little pains. The verses and language I have let come as they would, and I am about to publish more serious things this winter; afterwards, that is next year, if the thing should be remembered so long, I have no objection to the author being known, but *not now*. I should like well enough that it should both go to press and be printed very quickly; as more serious things are on the eve of engaging both the public attention and mine.

Next post day you will hear from me again, as I have many things to say, and expect to have to announce

[1] This was, as Mr. Garnett points out, an error.

[2] *Peter Bell the Third.*

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Mary's *new work*, now in the press. She has written out, as you will observe, *my* Peter, and this is, I suspect, the last thing she will do before the new birth.[1]

Affectionately yours,

My dear friend,

P. B. S.

LETTER XXXVII.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Florence, Nov. 6, 1819.

My dear Friends,

I have just finished a letter of five sheets on Carlile's affair,[2] and am in hourly expectation of Mary's confinement: you will imagine an excuse for my silence.

I forbear to address you, as I had designed, on the subject of your income as a public creditor of the English government, as it seems you have not the exclusive management of your funds; and the peculiar circumstances of the delusion are such that none but a very few persons will ever be brought to see its instability but by the experience of loss. If I were to convince you, Henry would probably be unable to convince his uncle. In vindication, however, of what I have already said, allow me to turn your attention to England at this *hour*.

In order to meet the national expenses, or rather that some approach towards meeting them might seem to be made, a tax of £3,000,000 was imposed. The first consequence of this has been a *defalcation* in the revenue at the rate of £3,600,000 a-year. Were the country in the most

[1] See Letter XXXVIII. [2] Given at the end of this volume.

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tranquil and prosperous state, the minister, in such a condition of affairs, must reduce the interest of the national debt, or add to it; a process which would only insure the greater ultimate reduction of the interest. But the people are nearly in a state of insurrection, and the least unpopular noblemen perceive the necessity of conducting[1] a spirit, which it is no longer possible to oppose. For submitting to this necessity—which, be assured, the haughty aristocrats unwillingly did—Lord Fitzwilliam has been degraded from his situation of Lord-Lieutenant. An additional army of 11,500 men has received orders to be organized. Everything is preparing for a bloody struggle, in which, if the ministers succeed, they will assuredly diminish the interest of the national debt, for no combination of the heaviest tyranny can raise the taxes for its payment. If the people conquer, the public creditor will equally suffer; for it is monstrous to imagine that they will submit to the perpetual inheritance of a double aristocracy. They will perhaps find some crown and church lands, and appropriate the tithes to make a kind of compensation to the public creditor. They will confiscate the estates of their political enemies. But all this will not pay a tenth part of their debt. The existing government, atrocious as it is, is the surest party to which a public creditor may attach himself. He may reason that *it may last my time*, though in the event the ruin is more complete than in the case of a popular revolution. I know you too well to believe you capable of arguing in this manner; I only reason on how things stand.

Your income may be reduced from £210 to £150, and then £100, and then by the issue of immense quantities of paper to save the immediate cause of

[1] Perhaps a misprint for *conciliating*.

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one of the conflicting parties, to any value however small; or the source of it may be cut off at once. The ministers had, I doubt not, long since determined to establish an arbitrary government; and if they had not determined so, they have now entangled themselves in that consequence of their instinct as rulers, and if they recede they must perish. They are, however, not receding, and we are on the eve of great actions.

Kindest regards to Henry. I hope he is not stopped for want of money, as I shall assuredly send him what he wants in a month from the date of my last letter. I received his letter from Pistoia, and have no other criticism to make on it, except the severest—that it is too short. How goes on Portuguese—and Theocritus? I have deserted the odorous gardens of literature, to journey across the great sandy desert of politics; not, as you may imagine, without the hope of finding some inchanted paradise. In all probability, I shall be overwhelmed by one of the tempestuous columns which are for-ever traversing, with the speed of a storm, and the confusion of a chaos, that pathless wilderness. You meanwhile will be lamenting in some happy oasis that I do not return. This is out-Calderonizing Muley.[1] We have had lightning and rain here in plenty. I like the Cascini very much, where I often walk alone, watching the leaves, and the rising and falling of the Arno. I am full of all kinds of literary plans.

Meanwhile, all yours most faithfully,

P. B. S.

[1] Shelley had been reading *El Principe Constante*, in which drama the heroic Moorish General, Muley, has ample occasion to express himself with all the vivid and romantic splendour of Calderon's most exalted manner.

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LETTER XXXVIII.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Firenze, Nov. 13,[1] 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yesterday morning Mary brought me a little boy.[2] She suffered but two hours' pain, and is now so well that it seems a wonder that she stays in bed. The babe is also quite well, and has begun to suck. You may imagine that this is a great relief and a great comfort to me amongst all my misfortunes, past, present, and to come.

Since I last wrote to you, some circumstances have occurred, not necessary to explain by letter, which make my pecuniary condition a very painful[3] one. The physicians absolutely forbid my travelling to England in the winter, but I shall probably pay you a visit in the spring. With what pleasure, among all the other sources of regret and discomfort with which England abounds for me, do I *think* of looking on the original of that kind and earnest face which is now opposite Mary's bed. It will be the only thing which Mary will envy me, or will need to envy me, in that journey; for I shall come alone. Shaking hands with you is worth all the trouble; the rest is clear loss.

I will tell you more about myself and my pursuits in my next letter.

Kind love to Marianne, Bessy, and all the children.

[1] Hunt gives the date as "Dec. 2," probably from the post-mark.

[2] Now Sir Percy Shelley, Bart.

[3] Hunt reads *difficult*.

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Poor Mary begins (for the first time) to look a little consoled. For we have spent, as you may imagine, a miserable five months.

Good bye, my dear Hunt,

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

I have had no letter from you for *a month.*

LETTER XXXIX.

To Mrs. GISBORNE.

Florence, Nov. 16, 1819.

Madonna,

I have been lately voyaging in a sea without my pilot, and although my sail has often been torn, my boat become leaky, and the log lost, I have yet sailed in a kind of way from island to island; some of craggy and mountainous magnificence, some clothed with moss and flowers, and radiant with fountains, some barren deserts. *I have been reading Calderon without you.* I have read the "Cisma de Inglaterra," the "Cabellos de Absalon," and three or four others. These pieces, inferior to those we read, at least to the "Principe Constante," in the splendour of particular passages, are perhaps superior in their satisfying completeness. The "Cabellos de Absalon" is full of the deepest and tenderest touches of nature. Nothing can be more pathetically conceived than the character of old David, and the tender and impartial love, overcoming all insults and all crimes, with which he regards his conflicting and disobedient

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sons. The incest scene of Amon and Tamar is perfectly tremendous. Well may Calderon say in the person of the former—

> Si sangre sin fuego hiere,
> qua fara sangre con fuego ?[1]

Incest is, like many other incorrect things, a very poetical circumstance. It may be the excess of love or hate. It may be the defiance of everything for the sake of another, which clothes itself in the glory of the highest heroism, or it may be that cynical rage which, confounding the good and the bad in existing opinions, breaks through them for the purpose of rioting in selfishness and antipathy. Calderon, following the Jewish historians, has represented Amon's action in the basest point of view—he is a prejudiced savage, acting what he abhors, and abhorring that which is the unwilling party to his crime.

Adieu, Madonna, yours truly,

P. B. S.

I transcribe you a passage from the Cisma de Inglaterra—spoken by "Carlos, Embaxador de Francia, enamorado de Ana Bolena." Is there anything in Petrarch finer than the second stanza ?

> Porque apenas el Sol se coronaba
> de nueva luz en la estacion primera,
> quando yo en sus umbrales adoraba
> segundo Sol en abreviada esfera ;
> la noche apenas trémula baxaba,
> à solos mis deseos lisonjera,
> quando un jardin, república de flores,
> era tercero fiel de mis amores.

[1] So in previous editions, and perhaps in the original letter itself, which I have not seen. The passage stands thus in Keil's four volume edition of Calderon's dramas :

> Pero si dice un proverbio,
> La sangre sin fuego hierve,
> ¿Qué hará la sangre con fuego ?

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Alli, el silencio de la noche fria,
el jazmin, que en las redes se enlazava,
el cristal de la fuente que corria,
el arroyo que á solas murmurava,
el viento que en las hojas se movia,
el Aura que en las flores respirava;
todo era amor'; què mucho, si en tal calma,
aves, fuentes, y flores tienen alma!

No has visto providente y oficiosa,
mover el ayre iluminada aveja,
que hasta beber la púrpura á la rosa
ya se acerca cobarde, y ya se alexa?
No has visto enamorada mariposa,
dar cercos á la luz, hasta que dexa,
en monumento fácil abrasadas
las alas de color tornasoladas?

Assi mi amor, cobarde muchos dias,
tornos hizo á la rosa y á la llama;
temor che ha sido entre cenizas frias,
tantas vezes llorado de quien ama;
pero el amor, que vence con porfias,
y la ocasion, que con disculpas llama,
me animaron, y aveja y mariposa
quemè las alas, y llegué á la rosa.[1]

LETTER XL.

To JOHN GISBORNE.

Florence, Nov. 16th, 1819.

MY DEAR SIR,

I envy you the first reading of Theocritus. Were not the Greeks a glorious people? What is there, as Job says of the Leviathan, like unto them? If the army of Nicias had not been defeated under the walls of Syracuse; if the Athenians had, acquiring Sicily, held the balance between Rome and Carthage, sent garrisons to the Greek colonies in the South of Italy, Rome might have been all

[1] For a translation of the last two stanzas, made by Medwin and revised by Shelley, see Poetical Works, Vol. IV, p. 283.

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that its intellectual condition entitled it to be, a tributary, not the conqueror of Greece; the Macedonian power would never have attained to the dictatorship of the civilized states of the world. Who knows whether, under the steady progress which philosophy and social institutions would have made, (for, in the age to which I refer, their progress was both rapid and secure,) among a people of the most perfect physical organization, whether the Christian religion would have arisen, or the barbarians have overwhelmed the wrecks of civilization which had survived the conquest and tyranny of the Romans? What, then, should we have been? As it is, all of us who are worth anything, spend our manhood in unlearning the follies, or expiating the mistakes of our youth. We are stuffed full of prejudices; and our natural passions are so managed, that if we restrain them we grow intolerant and precise, because we restrain them not according to reason, but according to error; and if we do not restrain them, we do all sorts of mischief to ourselves and others. Our imagination and understanding are alike subjected to rules the most absurd;—so much for Theocritus and the Greeks.[1]

In spite of all your arguments, I wish your money were out of the funds. This middle course which you speak of, and which may probably have place, will amount to your losing not all your income, nor retaining all, but have the half taken away. I feel intimately persuaded, whatever political forms may have place in England, that no party can continue many years, perhaps not many months, in the administration, without diminishing the interest of the national debt.—And once having commenced—and having done so safely—where will it end?

[1] See note to Letter LXIX.

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Give Henry my kindest thanks for his most interesting letter, and bid him expect one from me by the next post.

Mary and the babe continue well.—Last night we had a magnificent thunder storm, with claps that shook the house like an earthquake. Both Mary and Claire unite with me in kindest remembrances to all.

Most faithfully yours obliged,

P. B. S.

LETTER XLI.

To HENRY REVELEY.

Florence, Nov. 17th, 1819.

My dear Henry,

I was exceedingly interested by your letter, and I cannot but thank you for overcoming the inaptitude of a long disuse at my request, for my pleasure. It is a great thing done, the successful casting of the cylinder—may it be a happy auspice for what is to follow! I hope, in a few posts, to remit the necessary money for the completion. Meanwhile, are not those portions of the work which can be done without expense, saving time in their progress? Do you think you lose much money or time by this delay?

All that you say of the alteration in the form of the boat strikes me, though one of the multitude in this respect, as improvement. I long to get aboard her, and be an unworthy partaker in the glory of the astonish-

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ment of the Livornese, when she returns from her cruise round Melloria. When do you think she will be fit for sea?

Your volcanic description of the birth of the cylinder is very characteristic of you, and of it.[1] One might imagine God, when he made the earth, and saw the granite mountains and flinty promontories flow into their craggy forms, and the splendour of their fusion filling millions of miles of the void space, like the tail of a comet, so looking, so delighting in his work. God sees his machine spinning round the sun, and delights in its success, and has taken out patents to supply all the suns in space with the same manufacture. Your boat will be to the ocean of water, what this earth is to the ocean of æther—a prosperous and swift voyager.

When shall we see you all? *You* not, I suppose, till your boat is ready to sail—and then, if not before, I must, of course, come to Livorno. Our plans for the winter are yet scarcely defined; they tend towards our spending February and March at Pisa, where our communications will not be so distant, nor so epistolary. C—— left us a week ago, not without many lamentations, as all true lovers pay on such occasions. He is to

[1] Mrs. Shelley here inserted the following extract from Henry Reveley's letter:—

Friday, 12th Nov.

The event is now past—both the steam cylinder and air-pump were cast at three o'clock this afternoon. At two o'clock this morning I repaired to the mill to see that the preliminary operations, upon which the ultimate success of a *fount* greatly depends, were conducted with proper attention. The moulds are buried in a pit, made close, before the mouth of the furnace, so that the melted metal, when the plug is driven in, may run easily into them, and fill up the vacant space left between the core and the shell, in order to form the desired cylinders. The fire was lighted in the furnace at nine, and in three hours the metal was fused. At three o'clock it was ready to cast, the fusion being remarkably rapid, owing to the perfection of the furnace. The metal was also heated to an extreme degree, boiling with fury, and seeming to dance with the pleasure of running into its proper form. The plug was struck, and a massy stream of

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write me an account of the Trieste steam-boat, which I will transmit to you.

Mrs. Shelley, and Miss Clairmont return you their kindest salutations, with interest.

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

a bluish dazzling whiteness filled the moulds in the twinkling of a shooting star. The castings will not be cool enough to be drawn up till to-morrow afternoon; but, to judge from all appearances, I expect them to be perfect.

Saturday, 13th Nov.

They have been excavated and drawn up. I have examined them and found them really perfect; they are massive and strong to bear any usage and sea-water, *in saecula saeculorum*. I am now going on gently with the brass-work, which does not require any immediate expenses, and which I attend to entirely myself. I have no workmen about me at present.

With kindest salutations to Mrs. Shelley and Miss Clairmont, I remain most truly, Your obliged friend and devoted servant,

HENRY W. REVELEY.

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LETTER XLII.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Florence, Nov. 23,[1] 1819.

MY DEAR HUNT,

Why don't you write to us? I was preparing to send you something for your "Indicator," but I have been a drone instead of a bee in this business, thinking that perhaps, as you did not acknowledge any of my late inclosures, it would not be welcome to you, whatever I might send.

What a state England is in! But you will never write politics. I don't wonder;—but I wish, then, that you would write a paper in the "Examiner" on the actual state of the country, and what, under all circumstances of the conflicting passions and interests of men, we are to expect. Not what we ought to expect, nor what, if so and so were to happen, we might expect;—but what, as things are, there is reason to believe will come;—and send it me for my information. Every word a man has to say is valuable to the public now; and thus you will at once gratify your friend, nay, instruct, and either exhilarate him, or force him to be resigned,—and awaken the minds of the people.

I have no spirits to write what I do not know whether you will care much about: I know well that if I were

[1] Hunt gives the date as "Dec. 23."

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in great misery, poverty, &c., you would think of nothing else but how to amuse and relieve me. You omit me if I am prosperous.

* * * * * *[1]

I could laugh, if I found a joke, in order to put you in good-humour with me after my scolding;—in good-humour enough to write to us. * * * Affectionate love to and from all. This ought not only to be the *Vale* of a letter, but a superscription over the gate of life.

Your sincere Friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I send you a *sonnet*. I don't expect you to publish it, but you may show it to whom you please.

[1] Mrs. Shelley drops the marks of omission here.

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LETTER XLIII.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Florence, November,[1] 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Two letters, both bearing date Oct. 20, arrive on the same day :—one is always glad of twins.

We hear of a box arrived at Genoa with books and clothes; it must be yours. Meanwhile the babe is wrapt in flannel petticoats, and we get on with him as we can. He is small, healthy, and pretty. Mary is recovering rapidly. Marianne, I hope, is quite well.

You do not tell me whether you have received my lines on the Manchester affair. They are of the exoteric[2] species, and are meant, not for the "Indicator," but the "Examiner." I would send for the former, if you like, some letters on such subjects of art as suggest themselves in Italy. Perhaps I will, at a venture, send you a specimen of what I mean next post. I inclose you in this a piece for the "Examiner," or let it share the fate, whatever that fate may be, of the "Mask of Anarchy."[3]

I am sorry to hear that you have employed yourself in translating the "Aminta," though I doubt not it will be a just and beautiful translation. You ought to write Amintas. You ought to exercise your fancy in the perpetual creation of new forms of gentleness and beauty.

[1] Hunt reads *December*.

[2] Hunt reads *exotic*.

[3] What poem this was I do not know; but it cannot have been *Peter Bell the Third*, as inadvertently noted in former editions, because that was sent to Hunt in the letter of the 2nd of November, 1819.

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* * * * * *

With respect to translation, even *I* will not be seduced by it; although the Greek plays, and some of the ideal dramas of Calderon, (with which I have lately, and with inexpressible wonder and delight, become acquainted,) are perpetually tempting me to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the grey veil of my own words. And you know me too well to suspect, that I refrain from a belief that what I could substitute for them would deserve the regret which yours would, if suppressed. I have confidence in my moral sense alone; but that is a kind of originality. I have only translated the Cyclops of Euripides, when I could absolutely do nothing else, and the Symposium of Plato, which is the delight and astonishment of all who read it:—I mean the original, or so much of the original as is seen in my translation, not the translation itself.

* * * * * *

I think I have had an accession of strength since my residence in Italy, though the disease itself in the side, whatever it may be, is not subdued. Some day we shall all return from Italy. I fear that in England things will be carried violently by the rulers, and they will not have learned to yield in time to the spirit of the age. The great thing to do is to hold the balance between popular impatience and tyrannical obstinacy; to inculcate with fervour both the right of resistance and the duty of forbearance. You know my principles incite me to take all the good I can get in politics, for ever aspiring to something more. I am one of those whom nothing will fully satisfy, but who are ready to be partially satisfied in all that is practicable. We shall see.

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Give Bessy a thousand thanks from me for writing out in that pretty neat hand your kind and powerful defence. Ask what she would like best from Italian land. We mean to bring you all something; and Mary and I have been wondering what it shall be. Do you, each of you, choose.

* * * * * *

Adieu, my dear friend,

Yours affectionately ever,

P. B. S.

LETTER XLIV.

To HENRY REVELEY.

Florence, 18th Dec. 1819.

My dear Henry,

You see, as I said, it only amounts to delay, all this abominable entanglement. I send you 484 dollars, or ordinary francesconi, I suppose, but you will tell me what you receive in Tuscan money, if they are not—the produce of £100. So my heart is a little lightened, which, I assure you, was heavy enough until this moment, on your account. I write to Messrs. Ward to pay you.

I have received no satisfactory letter from my bankers, but I must expect it every week—or, at least, in a month from this date, when I will not fail to transmit you the remainder of what may be necessary.

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Every body here is talking of a steam-ship which is building at Leghorn; one person said, as if he knew the whole affair, that he was waiting in Tuscany to take his departure to Naples in it. Your name has not, to my knowledge, been mentioned. I think you would do well to encourage this publicity.

I have better health than I have known for a long time—ready for any stormy cruise. When will the ship be ready to sail? We have been feeding ourselves with the hope that Mr. Gisborne and your mother would have paid us their promised visit. I did not even hope, perhaps not even wish, that you should, until the engine is finished. My regret at this failure has several times impelled me to go to Leghorn—but I have always resisted the temptation. Ask them, intreat them, from me, to appoint some early day. We have a bed and room, and everything prepared.

I write in great haste, as you may see. Ever believe me, my dear Henry, your attached friend,

P. B. S.

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LETTER XLV.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Florence, Dec. 23rd, 1819.

My dear Friends,

I suffered more pain than it would be manly to confess, or than you can easily conceive, from that wretched uncertainty about the money. At last, however, it is certain that you will encounter no further check in the receiving supplies, and a weight is taken from my spirits which, in spite of many other causes of discomfort, makes itself known to have been a heavy load, by the lightness which I now feel in writing to you.

So the steamboat will take three months to finish? The vernal equinox will be over by that time, and the early wakening of the year have paved the Mediterranean with calm. Among other circumstances to regret in this delay, it is so far well that our first cruise will be made in serene weather.

I send you inclosed a mandate for 396 francesconi, which is what M. Torlonia incorrectly designates a hundred pounds—but as we count in the money of the country, that need make no difference to us.

I have just finished an additional act to "Prometheus," which Mary is now transcribing, and which will be inclosed for your inspection before it is transmitted to the bookseller. I am engaged in a political work—I am busy enough, and if the faculties of my mind were not imprisoned within a mind, whose bars are daily cares

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and vulgar difficulties, I might yet do something—but as it is—

Mary is well—but for this affair in London I think her spirits would be good. What shall I—what can I —what ought I to do? You cannot picture to yourself my perplexity.

Adieu, my dear friends.

Ever yours, faithfully attached,

P. B. S.

LETTER XLVI.

To THOMAS MEDWIN.

Florence, Jan. 17th, 1820.

My dear Medwin,

The winter at Florence has been, for the climate, unusually severe, and yet I imagine you must have suffered enough in Switzerland to make you regret that you did not come further south. At least I confidently expect that we shall see you in the Spring. We are fixed for the ensuing year in Tuscany, and you will always find me by addressing me at Leghorn.

Perhaps you belong to the tribe of the hopeless, and nothing shocks or surprises you in politics.

I have enough of unrebuked hope remaining to be struck with horror at the proceedings in England; yet I reflect, as a last consolation, that oppression which authorizes often produces resistance. These are not

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times in which one has much spirit for writing poetry, although there is a keen air in them that sharpens the wits of men, and makes them imagine vividly even in the midst of despondence.

I dare say the lake before you is a plain of solid ice, bounded by the Snowy hills, whose white mantles contrast with the aërial rose-colour of the eternal glaciers—a scene more grand, yet like the recesses of the Antarctic circle. If your health allows you to skate, this plain is the floor of your Paradise, and the white world seems spinning backwards as you fly. The thaw may have arrived, or you may have departed, and this letter reach you in a very different scene.

This Italy, believe me, is a pleasant place, especially Rome and Naples. Tuscany is delightful eight months of the year; but nothing reconciles me to the slightest indication of winter, much less such infernal cold as my nerves have been racked upon for the last ten days. At Naples all the worst is over in three weeks. When you come hither, you must take up your abode with me, and I will give you all the experience which I have bought, at the usual market price, during the last year and a half residence in Italy.

You used, I remember, to paint very well, and you were remarkable, if I do not mistake, for a peculiar taste in and knowledge of the belle arti. Italy is the place for you, the very place—the Paradise of exiles, the retreat of Pariahs. But I am thinking of myself rather than you. If you will be glad to see an old friend, who will be very glad to see you—if this is any inducement—come to Italy.

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LETTER XLVII.

To JOHN GISBORNE.

Florence, 25th Jan., 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,

We have suddenly taken the determination to avail ourselves of this lovely weather to approach you as far as Pisa. I need not assure you—unless my malady should violently return—you will see me at Leghorn.

We *embark;* and I promise myself the delight of the sky, the water, and the mountains. I must suffer at any rate, but I expect to suffer less in a boat than in a carriage. I have many things to say, which let me reserve till we meet.

I sympathize in all your good news, as I have done in your ill. Let Henry take care of himself, and not, desiring to combine too many advantages, check the progress of his recovery, the greatest of all.

Remember me affectionately to him and to Mrs. Gisborne, and accept for yourself my unalterable sentiments of regard. Meanwhile, *consider well your plans,* which I only half understand.

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

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LETTER XLVIII.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Pisa, 9th Feb., 1820.

Pray let us see you soon, or our threat may cost both us and you something—a visit to Livorno. The stage direction on the present occasion is, "exit Moonshine and enter Wall;" or rather four walls, who surround and take prisoners the Galan and Dama.

Seriously, pray do not disappoint us. We shall watch the sky, and the death of the Scirocco must be the birth of your arrival.

Mary and I are going to study mathematics. We design to take the most compendious, yet certain methods of arriving at the great results. We believe that your right-angled Triangle will contain the solution of the problem of how to proceed.

Do not write but *come*. Mary is too idle to write, but all that she has to say is *come*. She joins with me in condemning the moonlight plan. Indeed we ought not to be so selfish as to allow you to come at all, if it is to cost you all the fatigue and annoyance of returning the same night. But it will not be—so adieu.

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LETTER XLIX.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

[Postmark, *Pisa, Mr.* 25, 1820.]

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have received your letter, and in a few days afterwards that of B*** and E***—and I inclose you theirs and my answer. . . . . I have written to them a plain statement of the case, and a plain account of my situation. . . . . I think by the interposition of your kind offices the affair may be arranged.

I see with deep regret in to-day's papers the attempt to assassinate the Ministry. Everything seems to conspire against Reform. How Cobbett must laugh at the "resumption of gold payments." I long to see him.

I have a motto on a ring in Italian "Il buon tempo verrà." There is a tide both in public and in private affairs, which awaits both men and nations.

I have no news from Italy. We live here under a nominal tyranny administered according to the philosophic laws of Leopold and the mild opinions which are the fashion here. . . Tuscany is unlike all the other Italian States, in this respect.

* * * * * *

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LETTER L.

To THOMAS MEDWIN.

Pisa, April 16, 1820.

My dear Medwin,

I have delayed answering your letter, and sending you my ideas on its valuable accompaniment in consequence of an inexplicable impiccio of the Genoese Post, which got hold of your last communication, and which yet rests to be cleared up. I determined so soon as I found that the measures for obtaining it from them were drawn out to a hopeless length, to write immediately, and intreat you to send me a duplicate by Dejean's Diligence which goes to Florence, and addressed to me at Mr. Klieber's, the Banker there, who will immediately forward it to me.—I conjecture that it must be the *printed* book which you mention in your letter; I am consoled by reflecting that the loss and annoyance is less than if it had been a MS.

The volume of which you speak, if it resemble the *Pindarees*,[1] I cannot doubt is calculated to produce a considerable sensation.—That Poem is highly fit for popularity, considered in its subject; there being a strong demand in the imagination of our contemporaries for the scenery and situations which you have

[1] This is the title of the second of the two principal pieces in Medwin's *Sketches in Hindoostan with other Poems* (London, Ollier, 1821). See Note at p. 244, Vol. IV, Poetical Works.

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studied. I admire equally the richness and variety of the imagery with the ease and profusion of language in which it is expressed.

Perhaps the severe criticism of a friend jealous of every error, might discover some single lines and expressions which may be conceived to be changed for the better.—But these are few, and I by no means conceive myself qualified to do more than point them out; and if I should incur, as is probable, the charge of hypercriticism, you will know to what motives and feelings to impute it. I will inclose your *Pindarees* by the next post, with a list of these, and such corrections, since you ask me for them, as I can best make. But remember, I will not vouch for their not being much inferior to the passages they supplant.—The only general error, if it be such, in your Poem, seems to me to be the employment of Indian words, in the body of the piece, and the relegation of their meaning to the notes. Strictly, I imagine, every expression in a poem ought to be in itself an intelligible picture. But this practice, though foreign to that of the great Poets of former times, is so highly admired by our contemporaries that I can hardly counsel you to dissent. And then you have Moore and Lord Byron on your side, who being much better and more successful poets than I am, may be supposed to know better the road to success, than one who has sought and missed it.

I am printing some things which I am vain enough to wish you to see. Not that they will sell; they are the reverse, in this respect, of the razors in Peter Pindar. A man like me, can in fact only be a Poet, by dint of stinting himself of meat and drink to pay his printer's bill —that is he can only print poems on this condition.—

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But there is every reason to hope better things for you.

You will find me at Pisa in the autumn. Pisa until December will be an excellent climate for you, nor am I aware that Naples or Sicily would be more favourable, all things considered. The sun is certainly warmer, but unless you fit up a house expressly for the purpose of warmth, the Tramontana will enter by a thousand crevices, charged with frozen and freezing atoms. I suffered dreadfully at Naples from the cold, far more than at Florence, where I had a warm room, spending two successive winters in those cities. We shall at all events be at Pisa in the autumn, and I am almost certain we shall remain during the whole winter in a pleasant villa outside the gates. We will make you as comfortable as we can, but our menage is too philosophic to abound in much external luxury. The rest must be made up in good will.—Mrs. Shelley desires me to say how acceptable your visit will be to her. If you should come before the autumn we shall be at the Baths of Lucca, a delightful place, about 30 miles from this town.—You will find me a wretched invalid, unless a great change should take place.

As to the expense of Italy—why it is a very cheap place—a crown here goes as far as a pound note in England in all affairs of eating and drinking. The single article of clothes is the same.—Geneva seems to me about as dear as England; but I may have been horribly cheated.

I ought to tell you that we do not enter into Society. The few people we see are those who suit us,—and I believe nobody but us. I find saloons and compliments too great bores; though I am of an extremely social

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disposition.—I hope if they come to Italy I may see the lovely lady and your friend[1]—though I have never had the ague, I have found these sort of beings, especially the former, of infinite service in the maladies to which I am subject; and I have no doubt, if it could be supposed that anyone would neglect to employ such a medicine, that the best physicians would prescribe them, although they have been entered in no pharmacopœia.

Forgive my joking on what all poets ought to consider a sacred subject.—Courage, when we meet, we will set upon our melancholy and disorders, bind them like an evil genius and bury them in the Tyrrhene sea, nine fathom deep.—Adieu.

Affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

LETTER LI.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Pisa, April 23rd, 1820.

My dear Friends,

We were much pained to hear of the illness you all seem to have been suffering, and still more at the apparent dejection of your last letter. We are in daily expectation this lovely weather of seeing you, and I think the change of air and scene might be good for your health and spirits, even if *we* cannot enliven you. I shall have some business at Livorno soon; and I thought of coming

[1] Probably a reference to Edward and Jane Williams. See *The Magnetic Lady*, Poetical Works, Vol. IV, p. 129.

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to fetch you, but I have changed my plan, and mean to return with you, that I may save myself two journeys.

I have been thinking, and talking, and reading, Agriculture this last week. But I am very anxious to see you, especially now as instead of six hours, you give us thirty-six, or perhaps more. I shall hear of the steam-engine, and you will hear of *our* plans, when we meet, which will be in so short a time that I neither inquire nor communicate.

Ever affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

LETTER LII.

To THOMAS MEDWIN.[1]

* * * * *

no antidote could know.

Suppose you erase line 24 which seems superfluous, as one does not see why Oswald[2] shunned the *chase* in particular.

So—you will put in what you think are amendments, and which I have proposed because they appeared such to me. The poem is certainly very beautiful. I think the conclusion rather morbid; that a man should kill himself is one thing, but that he should live on in the

[1] This is merely the outside leaf of a letter, curiously addressed to "T. Medwin, Esq., Gentilhomme Anglais, Genève." Whether we have lost more than a couple of pages of kindly criticism on Medwin's verses it is difficult to determine.

[2] The hero both of *The Lion Hunt* and of *The Pindarees*. See note at p. 161. The line which Shelley calls line 24 is one of a triplet; and metre and sense would both have been complete without it; but Medwin retained it. It is at p. 81 of the volume—

And all employment shunned, but most the chace.

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dismal way that poor Oswald does, is too much. But it is the spirit of the age, and we are all infected with it. ———Send me as soon as you can copies of your printed poems.

I have just published a tragedy called the *Cenci* and I see they have reprinted it at Paris at Galignani's.[1] I dare say you will see the French edition, full of errors of course, at Geneva. The people from England tell me it is liked. It is dismal enough. My chief endeavour was to produce a delineation of passions which I had never participated in, in chaste language, and according to the rules of enlightened art.—I don't think very much of it; but it is for you to judge.

Particularly my dear friend write to me an account of your motions and when and where we may expect to see you. Are you not tempted by the Baths of Lucca?

I have been seriously ill since I last wrote to you, but I am now recovering.

Affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

Pisa, May 1st [1820].

[1] I have not succeeded in verifying this statement. It is possible that Galignani had some copies of Shelley's own edition, printed at Leghorn, which he was advertizing for sale.

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LETTER LIII.

To LEIGH HUNT.[1]

Pisa, May 1, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In a few days after the arrival of this letter you may expect a visit from the Gisbornes, who are now on the point of setting out to England. The Lady you will think delightful, if you take the trouble to make her talk to you.—I received your welcome letter, and the most welcome praises of my book[2] which it contained. I confess I did not expect it to be so successful with you, or with anyone, although it was written with a certain view to popularity, a view to which I sacrificed my own peculiar notions in a certain sort by treating of any subject, the basis of which is moral error. That you and that a few chosen judges should approve of it is however the chief aim of my ambition, and outweighs the censure of "a whole theatre of others." I shall be anxious to see the passage in the Examiner about my book, but I confess that I derive a more sincere satisfaction from your private opinion, when I know that no friendship could induce you to soften any disapprobation you might feel.——As to ******—I am afraid his demerits are very heavy: they must have been so before *you* could have perceived them. I should like

[1] In this letter, as in some others I have seen, Shelley filled the sheet, all except the doublings, addressing it merely to "Leigh Hunt, Esq." Mrs. Shelley filled up the address and added to the letter by writing on the doublings; and her initials are the only signature.

[2] *The Cenci.*

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to know how he has behaved, though I strongly suspect what the affair is.

* * * * * *

And in fact they are all rogues. It is less the character of the individual than the situation in which he is placed which determines him to be honest or dishonest; perhaps we ought to regard an honest bookseller, or an honest seller of anything else in the present state of human affairs as a kind of Jesus Christ. The system of society as it exists at present must be overthrown from the foundations with all its superstructure of maxims and of forms before we shall find anything but disappointment in our intercourse with any but a few select spirits. This remedy does not seem to be one of the easiest. But the generous few are not the less held to tend with all their efforts towards it. If faith is a virtue in any case it is so in politics rather than religion; as having a power of producing that a belief in which is at once a prophecy and a cause. So far the Preacher.——The Gisbornes stay in London about six weeks, and I have asked Hogg to come and see me in Italy; so possibly he will return with them. I dare not hope that you will add yourself to the party. I tried to get your Decameron &c. at Leghorn and Pisa to send with them, but was unsuccessful. It is to be had at Florence, and will be sent with some vases destined for Horace Smith; these vases are copies from the antique in alabaster, and I think will please you.[1] I wish to ask you if you know of any bookseller who would like to publish a little volume of *popular songs* wholly political, and destined to awaken and direct the

[1] They are from the well-known vase with a Bacchanalian subject in bas-relief, and are now in the possession of Mr. Round, of Brighton, who married a daughter of Horace Smith.

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imagination of the reformers. I see you smile, but answer my question. Of the politics of the day you never speak—I only see a Paris paper in English filled with extracts from the Courier.—I suppose you know that my tragedy has been republished in Paris in English.—[1]

Do you know that you might write much longer letters if [you] wrote closer—besides at the top of each page you leave a full inch. As you are so much accustomed to this way of writing that you could not easily break yourself of it, suppose when you came to the end of your paper you turned it topsy turvy and interlined it all the way.—I wish Marianne could write, but how can she? Bessy might; her last letter was 6th of January.

Ever yours,

M. W. S.

The Gisbornes will bring a little present for Marianne. I wish it had been more valuable or useful [but did?] not like letting you see friends from us without anything from us.

[1] See note at p. 166. At this point Shelley's writing ends: the rest of the letter is in Mrs. Shelley's writing.

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LETTER LIV.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Pisa, May, 1820.

My dear Peacock,

I congratulate you most sincerely on your choice and on your marriage. . . . . I was very much amused by your laconic account of the affair. It is altogether extremely like the *dénouement* of one of your own novels, and as such serves to [support ?] a theory I once imagined, that in everything any man ever wrote, spoke, acted, or imagined, is contained, as it were, an allegorical idea of his own future life, as the acorn contains the oak.

But not to ascend in my balloon. I have written to Hogg to ask him to pay me a visit, and though I had no hope of success, I commissioned him to endeavour to bring *you*. This becomes still more improbable from your news; but I need not say that your amiable mountaineer would make you still more welcome. My friends the Gisbornes are now really on their way to London, where they propose to stay only six weeks. I think you will like Mrs. Gisborne. Henry is an excellent fellow, but not very communicative. If you find anything in the shape of dulness or otherwise to endure in Mr. Gisborne, endure it for the lady's sake and mine; but for Heaven's sake! do not let him know that I think him stupid. Indeed, perhaps I do him an injustice,

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though certainly he proses.[1] Hogg will find it very agreeable (if he postpones his visit so long, or if he visits me at all) to join them on their return. I wish you, and Hogg, and Hunt, and—I know not who besides—would come and spend some months with me together in this wonderful land.

We know little of England here. I take in Galignani's paper, which is filled with extracts from the *Courier*, and from those accounts it appears probable that there is but little unanimity in the mass of the people; and that a civil war impends from the success of ministers, and the exasperation of the poor. I wait anxiously for your Cobbett . . . . .

I see my tragedy has been republished in Paris; if that is the case, it ought to sell in London; but I hear nothing from Ollier.

I have suffered extremely this winter; but I feel myself most materially better at the return of spring. I am on the whole greatly benefited by my residence in Italy, and but for certain moral causes should probably have been enabled to re-establish my system completely.

Believe me, my dear Peacock,

yours very sincerely,

P. B. S.

Pray make my best regards acceptable to your new companion.

[1] Peacock says, "I think he did. I found Mr. Gisborne an agreeable and well-informed man. He and his amiable and accomplished wife have long been dead. I should not have printed what Shelley says of him if any person were living whom the remembrance could annoy."

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LETTER LV.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE

(London).

Pisa, May 26th, 1820.

My dear Friends,

I write to you thus early, because I have determined to accept of your kind offer about the correction of "Prometheus." The bookseller makes difficulties about sending the proofs to me, and to whom else can I so well entrust what I am so much interested in having done well; and to whom would I prefer to owe the recollection of an additional kindness done to me? I inclose you two little papers of corrections and additions;—I do not think you will find any difficulty in interpolating them into their proper places.

Well, how do you like London, and your journey; the Alps in their beauty and their eternity; Paris in its slight and transitory colours; and the wearisome plains of France—and the *moral* people with whom you drank tea last night? Above all, *how* are you? And of the last question, believe me, we are now most anxiously waiting for a reply—until which I will say nothing, nor ask anything. I rely on the journal with as much security as if it were already written.

I am just returned from a visit to Leghorn, Casciano, and your old fortress at Sant' Elmo. I bought the vases you saw for about twenty sequins less than Micale asked, and had them packed up, and, by the polite assistance of

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your friend, Mr. Guebhard, sent them on board. I found your Giuseppe very useful in all this business. He got me tea and breakfast, and I slept in your house, and departed early the next morning for Casciano. Everything seems in excellent order at Casa Ricci—garden, pigeons, tables, chairs, and beds. As I did not find my bed sealed up, I left it as I found it. What a glorious prospect you had from the windows of Sant' Elmo! The enormous chain of the Apennines, with its many-folded ridges, islanded in the misty distance of the air; the sea, so immensely distant, appearing as at your feet; and the prodigious expanse of the plain of Pisa, and the dark green marshes lessened almost to a strip by the height of the blue mountains overhanging them. Then the wild and unreclaimed fertility of the foreground, and the chesnut trees, whose vivid foliage made a sort of resting-place to the sense before it darted itself to the jagged horizon of this prospect. I was altogether delighted. I had a respite from my nervous symptoms, which was compensated to me by a violent cold in the head. There was a tradition about you at Sant' Elmo—*An English family that had lived here in the time of the French.* The doctor, too, at the Bagni knew you. The house is in a most dilapidated condition, but I suppose all that is curable.

We go to the Bagni[1] next month—but still direct to Pisa as safest. I shall write to you the *ultimates* of my commission in my next letter. I am undergoing a course of the Pisan baths, on which I lay no singular stress—but they soothe. I ought to have peace of mind, leisure,

[1] Mrs. Shelley explains that these were "baths of natural warm springs, distant four miles from Pisa, and called indifferently Bagni di Pisa, and Bagni di San Giuliano."

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tranquillity; this I expect soon. Our anxiety about Godwin is very great, and any information that you could give a day or two earlier than he might, respecting any decisive event in his law-suit, would be a great relief. Your impressions about Godwin, (I speak especially to Madonna mia, who had known him before,) will especially interest me. You know that added years only add to my admiration of his intellectual powers, and even the moral resources of his character. Of my other friends I say nothing. To see Hunt is to like him; and there is one other recommendation which he has to you, he is my friend. To know H——,[1] if any one can know him, is to know something very unlike, and inexpressibly superior, to the great mass of men.

Will Henry write me an adamantine letter, flowing, not like the words of Sophocles, with honey, but molten brass and iron, and bristling with wheels and teeth? I saw his steam-boat asleep under the walls. I was afraid to waken it, and ask it whether it was dreaming of him, for the same reason that I would have refrained from awakening Ariadne, after Theseus had left her—unless I had been Bacchus.

Affectionately and anxiously yours,

P. B. S.

[1] Presumably Hogg. *Cf.* the *Letter to Maria Gisborne* (Poetical Works, Vol. III, p. 236).

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LETTER LVI.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE

(London).

My dear Friends,

I am to a certain degree indifferent as to the reply to our last proposal, and therefore will not allude to it. Permit me only on subjects of this nature to express one sentiment, which you would have given me credit for even if not expressed. Let no considerations of *my* interest, or any retrospect to the source from which the funds were supplied, modify your decision as to returning and pursuing or abandoning the adventure of the steam-engine. My object was solely your true advantage, and it is when I am baffled of this, by any attention to a mere form, that I shall be ill requited. Nay, more, I think it for your interest, should you obtain almost whatever situation for Henry, to accept Clementi's proposal,[1] and remain in England;—not without accepting it, for it does no more than balance the difference of expense between Italy and London; and if you have any trust in the justice of my moral sense, and believe that in what concerns true honour and virtuous conduct in life, I am an experienced counsellor, you will not hesitate—these[2] things being equal—to accept this proposal. The opposition I made, while you were in Italy, to the abandonment

[1] Clementi had offered to give Mrs. Gisborne music lessons, with a view to her teaching music.

[2] So in previous editions, but probably a misprint for *other*.

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of the steam-boat project, was founded, you well know, on the motives which have influenced everything that ever has guided, or ever will guide, anything that I can do or say respecting you. I thought it against Henry's interest. I think it now against his interest that he and you should abandon your prospects in England. As to us —we are uncertain people, who are chased by the spirits of our destiny from purpose to purpose, like clouds by the wind.

There is one thing more to be said. If you decide to remain in England, assuredly it would be foolish to return. Your journey would cost you between £100 and £200, a sum far greater than you could expect to save by the increased price for[1] which you would sell your things. Remit the matter to me, and I will cast off my habitual character, and attend to the minutest points. With Mr. G—'s, devil take his name, I can't write it—you know who's assistance, all this might be accomplished in such a manner as to save a very considerable sum. Though I shall suffer from your decision in the proportion as your society is delightful to me, I cannot forbear expressing my persuasion, that the time, the expense, and the trouble of returning to Italy, if your ultimate decision be to settle in London, ought all to be spared. A year, a month, a week, at Henry's age, and with his purposes, ought not to be unemployed. It was the depth with which I felt this truth, which impelled me to incite him to this adventure of the steam-boat.

[1] In previous editions *by*.

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LETTER LVII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Leghorn, July 12th, 1820.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I remember you said that when Auber married you were afraid you would see or hear but little of him. "There are two voices," says Wordsworth, "one of the mountains and one of the sea, both a mighty voice." So you have two wives—one of the mountains, all of whose claims I perfectly admit, whose displeasure I deprecate, and from whom I feel assured that I have nothing to fear: the other of the sea, the India House, who perhaps makes you write so much, that I suppose you have not a scrawl to spare. I make bold to write to you on the news that you are correcting my *Prometheus*, for which I return thanks, and I send some things which may be added. I hear of you from Mr. Gisborne, but from you I do not hear. Well, how go on the funds and the Romance? Cobbett's euthanasia seems approaching, and I suppose you will have some rough festivals at the apotheosis of the Debt.

Nothing, I think, shews the generous gullibility of the English nation more than their having adopted her Sacred Majesty as the heroine of the day, in spite of all their prejudices and bigotry. I, for my part, of course wish no harm to happen to her, even if she has, as I firmly believe, amused herself in a manner rather indecorous with any courier or baron. But I cannot

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help adverting to it as one of the absurdities of royalty, that a vulgar woman, with all those low tastes which prejudice considers as vices, and a person whose habits and manners every one would shun in private life, without any redeeming virtues, should be turned into a heroine because she is a queen, or, as a collateral reason, because her husband is a king; and he, no less than his ministers, are so odious that everything, however disgusting, which is opposed to them, is admirable. The Paris paper, which I take in, copied some excellent remarks from the *Examiner* about it.

We are just now occupying the Gisbornes' house at Leghorn, and I have turned Mr. Reveley's workshop into my study. The Libecchio here howls like a chorus of fiends all day, and the weather is just pleasant,—not at all hot, the days being very misty, and the nights divinely serene. I have been reading with much pleasure the Greek romances. The best of them is the pastoral of Longus: but they are all very entertaining, and would be delightful if they were less rhetorical and ornate. I am translating in *ottava rima* the Hymn to Mercury, of Homer. Of course my stanza precludes a literal translation. My next effort will be, that it should be legible—a quality much to be desired in translations.

I am told that the magazines &c. blaspheme me at a great rate. I wonder why I write verses, for nobody reads them. It is a kind of disorder, for which the regular practitioners prescribe what is called a torrent of abuse; but I fear that can hardly be considered as a specific . . . . . .

I inclose two additional poems, to be added to those printed at the end of *Prometheus:* and I send them to

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you, for fear Ollier might not know what to do in case he objected to some expressions in the fifteenth and sixteenth stanzas;[1] and that you would do me the favour to insert an asterisk, or asterisks, with as little expense of the sense as may be. The other poem I send to you, not to make two letters. I want Jones's Greek Grammar very much for Mary, who is deep in Greek. I thought of sending for it in sheets by the post; but as I find it would cost as much as a parcel, I would rather have a parcel, including it and some other books, which you would do me a great favour by sending by the first ship. Never send us more reviews than two back on any of Lord Byron's works, as we get them here. Ask Ollier, Mr. Gisborne, and Hunt whether they have anything to send.

Believe me, my dear Peacock,

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

Jones's Greek Grammar; Schrevelii Lexicon; the *Greek Exercises; Melincourt*, and *Headlong Hall;* papers, and *Indicators*, and whatever else you may think interesting. Godwin's *Answer to Malthus*, if out. Six copies of the 2d Edit. of Cenci.

[1] These were the fifteenth and sixteenth stanzas of the *Ode to Liberty*. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

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LETTER LVIII.

To THOMAS MEDWIN.

Pisa, July 20, 1820.

MY DEAR MEDWIN,

I wrote to you a day or two ago at Geneva. I have since received your letter from the mountains. How much I envy you, or rather how much I sympathize in the delights of your wandering. I have a passion for such expeditions, although partly the capriciousness of my health, and partly the want of the incitement of a companion, keep me at home. I see the mountains, the sky, and the trees from my windows, and recollect, as an old man does the mistress of his youth, the raptures of a more familiar intercourse, but without his regrets, for their forms are yet living in my mind. I hope you will not pass Tuscany, leaving your promised visit unpaid. I leave it to you to make the project of taking up your abode with such an animal of the other world as I am, agreeable to your friend; but Mrs. Shelley unites with me in assuring both yourself and him that, whatever else may be found deficient, a sincere welcome is at least in waiting for you.

I am delighted with your approbation of my *Cenci*, and am encouraged to wish to present you with *Prometheus Unbound*, a drama also, but a composition of a totally different character. I do not know if it be wise to affect variety in compositions, or whether the attempt to excel in many ways does not debar from excellence in

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one particular kind. *Prometheus Unbound* is in the merest spirit of ideal poetry, and not, as the name would indicate, a mere imitation of the Greek drama; or, indeed, if I have been successful, is it an imitation of anything. But you will judge. I hear it is just printed, and I probably shall receive copies from England before I see you. Your objection to the *Cenci*—as to the introduction of the name of God—is good, inasmuch as the play is addressed to a Protestant people; but *we* Catholics speak eternally and familiarly of the First Person of the Trinity, and, amongst *us*, religion is more interwoven with, and is less extraneous to, the system of ordinary life. As to Cenci's Curse, I know not whether I can defend it or no. I wish I may be able; and, as it often happens respecting the worst part of an author's work, it is a particular favourite with me. I prided myself—as since your approbation I hope that I had just cause to do—upon the two concluding lines of the play. I confess I cannot approve of the squeamishness which excludes the exhibition of such *subjects* from the scene—a squeamishness the produce, as I firmly believe, of a lower tone of the public mind, and foreign to the majestic and confident wisdom of the golden age of our country. What think you of my boldness? I mean to write a play, in the spirit of human nature, without prejudice or passion, entitled *Charles the First*. So vanity intoxicates people; but let those few who praise my verses, and in whose approbation I take so much delight, answer for the sin.

I wonder what in the world the Queen has done. I should not wonder, after the whispers I have heard, to find that the green bag contained evidence that she had imitated Pasiphae, and that the Committee should re-

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commend to Parliament a Bill to exclude all Minotaurs from the succession. What silly stuff is this to employ a great nation about. I wish the King and the Queen, like Punch and his wife, would fight out their disputes in person.

What is very strange, I can in no manner discover your parcels; I never knew anything more unfortunate. Klieber sends me your letters regularly (which, by the bye, I wish in future you would direct to Pisa, as I have no money business now in Florence), but he has heard of no parcel or book.

This warm weather agrees excellently with me. I only wish it would last all the year. Many things both to say and to hear be referred until we meet.[1]

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

[1] I am not sure that there is anything wrong here. Possibly we should read *must be referred*, or *may be referred;* but it is also possible that *be referred* is meant for the imperative.

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LETTER LIX.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(LEGHORN).

Casa Silva, Sunday morn. (*Pisa, July 23rd,*[1] 1820.)

My dear Love,

I believe I shall have taken a very pleasant and spacious apartment at the Bagni for three months. It is, as all the others are—dear. I shall give forty or forty-five sequins for the three months, but as yet I do not know which. I could get others something cheaper, and a great deal worse; but if we would write, it is requisite to have space.

To-morrow evening, or the following morning, you will probably see me. Mr. T——[2] is planning a journey to England to secure his property in the event of a revolution, which, he is persuaded, is on the eve of exploding. I neither believe that, nor do I fear that the consequences will be so immediately destructive to the existing forms of social order. Money will be delayed, and the exchange

[1] Although this letter has hitherto appeared dated Sunday morning, 20 July, 1821,—a date which fell on a Friday, there is no reasonable doubt that the letter was written in July, 1820, and not much doubt as to the particular day. Mrs. Shelley herself placed the letter before one dated the 1st of September, 1820; and the allusion to the Queen Caroline affair points to the same period. We know that Shelley was at Pisa on the 20th of July 1820, and writing to Medwin on the same subject. Then the state of affairs at Naples and Palermo, which Shelley describes, is that of 1820. The date of the year, therefore, was clearly a misprint in former editions; and as the 23rd of July, 1820, was a Sunday, and "0" is a common misprint for "3," I should say the figure 20 ought to be 23.

[2] Probably Mr. Tighe, son of the authoress of *Psyche*.

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reduced very low, and my annuity and Mrs. M's[1], on account of these being *money*, will be in some danger; but land is quite safe. Besides, it will not be so rapid. Let us hope we shall have a reform. Mr. T—— will be lulled into security, while the slow progress of things is still flowing on, after this affair of the Queen may appear to be blown over. There is bad news from Palermo: the soldiers resisted the people, and a terrible slaughter, amounting, it is said, to four thousand men, ensued. The event, however, was as it should be. Sicily, like Naples, is free. By the brief and partial accounts of the Florence paper, it appears that the enthusiasm of the people was prodigious, and that the women fought from the houses, raining down boiling oil on the assailants.

I am promised a bill on Vienna on the 5th, the day on which my note will be paid, and the day on which I propose to leave Leghorn. Mrs. M. is very unhappy at the idea of T.'s going to England, though she seems to feel the necessity of it. Some time or other he must go to settle his affairs, and they seem to agree that this is the best opportunity. *I* have no thought of leaving Italy. The best thing we can do is to save money, and, if things take a decided turn (which I am convinced they will at last, but not perhaps for two or three years,) it will be time for me to assert my rights, and preserve my annuity. Meanwhile, another event may decide us.

Kiss sweet babe, and kiss yourself for me—I love you affectionately.

P. B. S.

I have taken the house for forty sequins for three

[1] Probably "Mrs. Mason" (Lady Mountcashel).

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months—a good bargain, and a very good house as things go—this is about thirteen sequins a month. To-morrow I go to look over the inventory; expect me therefore on Tuesday morning.

Sunday evening.

LETTER LX.[1]

To JOHN KEATS.

Pisa, 27th July, 1820.

MY DEAR KEATS,

I hear with great pain the dangerous accident you have undergone, and Mr. Gisborne, who gives me the account of it, adds that you continue to wear a consumptive appearance. This consumption is a disease particularly fond of people who write such good verses as you have done, and with the assistance of an English winter it can often indulge its selection. I do not think that young and amiable poets are bound to gratify its taste; they have entered into no bond with the muses to that effect. But seriously (for I am joking on what I

[1] This letter was published in an article contributed by the late Mr. G. H. Lewes to *The Westminster Review* (No. LXIX, April, 1841). It was afterwards included with some others of a genuine character among the spurious letters published by Mr. Moxon in 1852,—the daring forger of those letters having actually copied in a *quasi*-Shelleyan hand this and other documents previously published. Keats had broken a blood-vessel at Hunt's house, on the night of the 22nd of June; and the Gisbornes heard this from the Hunts on the 24th (as I find from Mrs. Gisborne's journal, in my possession). On the 12th of July they saw him, "under sentence of death from Dr. Lamb. He never spoke," writes Mrs. Gisborne, "and looks emaciated."

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am very anxious about) I think you would do well to pass the winter in Italy and avoid so tremendous an accident, and if you think it as necessary as I do, so long as you continue to find Pisa or its neighbourhood agreeable to you, Mrs. Shelley unites with myself in urging the request that you would take up your residence with us. You might come by sea to Leghorn (France is not worth seeing, and the sea is particularly good for weak lungs), which is within a few miles of us. You ought, at all events, to see Italy, and your health, which I suggest as a motive, may be an excuse to you. I spare declamation about the statues, and paintings, and ruins, and what is a greater piece of forbearance, about the mountains and streams, the fields, the colours of the sky, and the sky itself.

I have lately read your *Endymion* again, and even with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion. This people in general will not endure, and that is the cause of the comparatively few copies which have been sold. I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will. I always tell Ollier to send you copies of my books. *Prometheus Unbound* I imagine you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter. *The Cenci* I hope you have already received —it was studiously composed in a different style.

"Below the *good* how far! but far above the *great!*"

In poetry I have sought to avoid system and mannerism. I wish those who excel me in genius would pursue the same plan.

Whether you remain in England, or journey to Italy,

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believe that you carry with you my anxious wishes for your health, happiness, and success wherever you are, or whatever you undertake, and that I am,

Yours sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.[1]

LETTER LXI.

To MRS. SHELLEY

(BAGNI DI SAN GIULIANO).

[*Leghorn,*] *Casa Ricci, Sept. 1st,* 1820.

I AM afraid, my dearest, that I shall not be able to be with you so soon as to-morrow evening, though I shall use every exertion. Del Rosso I have not seen, nor shall until this evening. Jackson I have, and he is to drink tea with us this evening, and bring the *Constitutionnel*.

You will have seen the papers, but I doubt that they will not contain the latest and most important news. It is certain, by private letters from merchants, that a serious insurrection has broken out in Paris, and the *reports* last night are that an attack made by the populace on the Tuileries still continued when the last accounts came away. At Naples the constitutional party have declared to the Austrian minister, that if the Emperor should make war upon them, their first action would be to put to death *all* the members of the royal family—a necessary and most just measure,

[1] The answer to this letter will be found in the Appendix.

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when the forces of the combatants, as well as the merits of their respective causes, are so unequal. That kings should be everywhere the hostages for liberty were admirable.

What will become of the Gisbornes, or of the English at Paris? How soon will England itself and perhaps Italy be caught by the sacred fire? And what—to come from the solar system to a grain of sand—*shall we do?*

Kiss babe for me, and your own self. I am somewhat better, but my side still vexes me—a little.

Your affectionate S.

LETTER LXII.[1]

To the EDITOR of the "QUARTERLY REVIEW."

Sir,

Should you cast your eye on the signature of this letter before you read the contents, you might imagine that they related to a slanderous paper which appeared in your Review some time since. I never notice anonymous attacks. The wretch who wrote it has doubtless the additional reward of a consciousness of his motives, besides the thirty guineas a sheet, or whatever it is that you pay him. Of course you cannot be answerable for all the writings which you edit, and *I* certainly bear you no ill-will for having edited the abuse to which I allude—indeed, I was too much flattered by being compared to Pharaoh, not readily to

[1] Mrs. Shelley says this letter was never sent.

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forgive editor, printer, publisher, stitcher, or any one, except the despicable writer, connected with something so exquisitely entertaining. Seriously speaking, I am not in the habit of permitting myself to be disturbed by what is said or written of me, though, I dare say, I may be condemned sometimes justly enough. But I feel, in respect to the writer in question, that "I am there sitting, where he durst not soar."

The case is different with the unfortunate subject of this letter, the author of Endymion, to whose feelings and situation I intreat you to allow me to call your attention. I write considerably in the dark; but if it is Mr. Gifford that I am addressing, I am persuaded that in an appeal to his humanity and justice, he will acknowledge the *fas ab hoste doceri*. I am aware that the first duty of a Reviewer is towards the public, and I am willing to confess that the Endymion is a poem considerably defective, and that, perhaps, it deserved as much censure as the pages of your Review record against it; but, not to mention that there is a certain contemptuousness of phraseology from which it is difficult for a critic to abstain, in the review of Endymion, I do not think that the writer has given it its due praise. Surely the poem, with all its faults, is a very remarkable production for a man of Keats's age, and the promise of ultimate excellence is such as has rarely been afforded even by such as have afterwards attained high literary eminence. Look at book II. line 833, &c., and book III. line 113 to 120—read down that page, and then again from line 193. I could cite many other passages, to convince you that it deserved milder usage. Why it should have been reviewed at all, excepting for the purpose of bringing its excellences into notice, I cannot conceive, for it was very

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little read, and there was no danger that it should become a model to the age of that false taste, with which I confess that it is replenished.

Poor Keats was thrown into a dreadful state of mind by this review, which, I am persuaded, was not written with any intention of producing the effect, to which it has, at least, greatly contributed, of embittering his existence, and inducing a disease from which there are now but faint hopes of his recovery. The first effects are described to me to have resembled insanity, and it was by assiduous watching that he was restrained from effecting purposes of suicide. The agony of his sufferings at length produced the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs, and the usual process of consumption appears to have begun. He is coming to pay me a visit in Italy; but I fear that unless his mind can be kept tranquil, little is to be hoped from the mere influence of climate.

But let me not extort anything from your pity. I have just seen a second volume, published by him evidently in careless despair. I have desired my bookseller to send you a copy, and allow me to solicit your especial attention to the fragment of a poem entitled "Hyperion," the composition of which was checked by the Review in question. The great proportion of this piece is surely in the very highest style of poetry. I speak impartially, for the canons of taste to which Keats has conformed in his other compositions are the very reverse of my own. I leave you to judge for yourself: it would be an insult to you to suppose that from motives, however honourable, you would lend yourself to a deception of the public.

* * * * * *

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LETTER LXIII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Pisa, November (probably 8th), 1820.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I also delayed to answer your last letter, because I was waiting for something to say : or at least, something that should be likely to be interesting to you. The box containing my books, and consequently your Essay against the cultivation of poetry, has not arrived ; my wonder, meanwhile, in what manner you support such a heresy in this matter-of-fact and money-loving age, holds me in suspense. Thank you for your kindness in correcting *Prometheus*, which I am afraid gave you a great deal of trouble. Among the modern things which have reached me is a volume of poems by Keats : in other respects insignificant enough, but containing the fragment of a poem called *Hyperion*. I dare say you have not time to read it ; but it is certainly an astonishing piece of writing, and gives me a conception of Keats which I confess I had not before.

I hear from Mr. Gisborne that you are surrounded with statements and accounts,—a chaos of which you are the God ; a sepulchre which encloses in a dormant state the Chrysalis of the Pavonian Psyche. May you start into life some day, and give us another *Melincourt*. Your *Melincourt* is exceedingly admired, and I think much more so than any of your other writings. In this respect the

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world judges rightly. There is more of the true spirit, and an object less indefinite, than in either *Headlong Hall* or Scythrop.

I am, speaking literally, infirm of purpose. I have great designs, and feeble hopes of ever accomplishing them. I read books, and, though I am ignorant enough, they seem to teach me nothing. To be sure, the reception the public have given me might go far enough to damp any man's enthusiasm. They teach you, it may be said, only what is true. Very true, I doubt not, and the more true the less agreeable. I can compare my experience in this respect to nothing but a series of wet blankets. I have been reading nothing but Greek and Spanish. Plato and Calderon have been my gods. We are now in the town of Pisa. A schoolfellow of mine from India[1] is staying with me, and we are beginning Arabic together. Mary is writing a novel,[2] illustrative of the manners of the Middle Ages in Italy, which she has raked out of fifty old books. I promise myself success from it; and certainly, if what is wholly original will succeed, I shall not be disappointed . . . . . .

Adieu. *In publica commoda peccem, si longo sermone.*

Ever faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] Thomas Medwin.

[2] *Valperga.*

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LETTER LXIV.

To JOHN GISBORNE

(LIGHORN).

Pisa, oggi (*November*, 1820).

MY DEAR SIR,

I send you the Phædon and Tacitus. I congratulate you on your conquest of the Iliad. You must have been astonished at the perpetually increasing magnificence of the last seven books. Homer there truly begins to be himself. The battle of the Scamander, the funeral of Patroclus, and the high and solemn close of the whole bloody tale in tenderness and inexpiable sorrow, are wrought in a manner incomparable with anything of the same kind. The Odyssey is sweet, but there is nothing like this.

I am bathing myself in the light and odour of the flowery and starry Autos. I have read them all more than once. Henry will tell you how much I am in love with Pacchiani.[1] I suffer from my disease considerably. Henry will also tell you how much, and how whimsically, he alarmed me last night.

My kindest remembrances to Mrs. Gisborne, and best wishes for your health and happiness.

Faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

I have a new Calderon coming from Paris.

[1] "Il Professore" of Medwin's Life of Shelley: he introduced the Shelleys to the Lady Emilia Viviani.

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LETTER LXV.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Pisa, February 15th, 1821.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

The last letter I received from you, nearly four months from the date thereof, reached me by the boxes which the Gisbornes sent by sea. I am happy to learn that you continue in good external and internal preservation. I received at the same time your printed denunciations against general, and your written ones against particular, poetry; and I agree with you as decidedly in the latter as I differ in the former. The man whose critical gall is not stirred up by such ottava rimas as Barry Cornwall's, may safely be conjectured to possess no gall at all. The world is pale with the sickness of such stuff. At the same time, your anathemas against poetry itself excited me to a sacred rage, or *caloëthes*[1] *scribendi* of vindicating the insulted Muses. I had the greatest possible desire to break a lance with you, within the lists of a magazine, in honour of my mistress Urania; but God willed that I should be too lazy, and wrested the victory from your hope: since first having unhorsed poetry, and the universal sense of the wisest in all ages, an easy conquest would have remained to you in me, the knight of the shield of shadow and the lance of gossamere. Besides, I was at that moment reading Plato's *Ion*,

[1] Peacock printed *cacoëthes* for *caloëthes*, apparently not perceiving Shelley's joke. It is certainly *caloëthes* in the letter.

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which I recommend you to reconsider. Perhaps in the comparison of Platonic and Malthusian doctrines, the *mavis errare* of Cicero is a justifiable argument; but I have a whole quiver of arguments on such a subject.

Have you seen Godwin's answer to the apostle of the rich?[1] And what do you think of it? It has not yet reached me, nor has your box, of which I am in daily expectation.

We are now in the crisis and point of expectation in Italy. The Neapolitan and Austrian armies are rapidly approaching each other, and every day the news of a battle may be expected. The former have advanced into the ecclesiastical States, and taken hostages from Rome to assure themselves of the neutrality of that power, and appear determined to try their strength in open battle. I need not tell you how little chance there is that the new and undisciplined levies of Naples should stand against a superior force of veteran troops. But the birth of liberty in nations abounds in examples of a reversal of the ordinary laws of calculation: the defeat of the Austrians would be the signal of insurrection throughout all Italy.

I am devising literary plans of some magnitude. But nothing is more difficult and unwelcome than to write without a confidence of finding readers; and if my play of the *Cenci* found none or few, I despair of ever producing anything that shall merit them.

Among your anathemas of the modern attempts in poetry, do you include Keats's *Hyperion*? I think it very fine. His other poems are worth little; but if the

[1] The book referred to is *Of Population. An Enquiry concerning the Power of Increase in the Numbers of Mankind, being an Answer to Mr. Malthus's Essay on that Subject* (London, Longmans, 1820).

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Hyperion be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our contemporaries.

I suppose *you* are writing nothing but Indian laws, &c. I have but a faint idea of your occupation; but I suppose it has much to do with pen and ink.

Mary desires to be kindly remembered to you; and I remain, my dear Peacock, yours very faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

LETTER LXVI.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Pisa, March 21st, 1821.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I dispatch by this post the first part of an essay intended to consist of three parts, which I design for an antidote to your *Four Ages of Poetry*. You will see that I have taken a more general view of what is poetry than you have, and will perhaps agree with several of my positions, without considering your own touched. But read and judge; and do not let us imitate the great founders of the picturesque, Price and Payne Knight, who, like two ill-trained beagles, began snarling at each other when they could not catch the hare.

I hear the welcome news of a box from England announced by Mr. Gisborne. How much new poetry does it contain? The Bavii and Mævii of the day are very fertile; and I wish those who honour me with boxes would read and inwardly digest your *Four Ages*

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of Poetry; for I had much rather, for my own private reading, receive political, geological, and moral treatises than this stuff in *terza, ottava,* and *tremillesima rima* whose earthly baseness has attracted the lightning of your undiscriminating censure upon the temple of immortal song. Procter's verses enrage me far more than those of Codrus did Juvenal, and with better reason. Juvenal need not have been stunned unless he had liked it; but my boxes are packed with this trash, to the exclusion of what I want to see. But your box will make amends.

Do you see much of Hogg now? and the Boinvilles and Colson? Hunt I suppose not. And are you occupied as much as ever? We are surrounded here in Pisa by revolutionary volcanoes, which, as yet, give more light than heat; the lava has not yet reached Tuscany. But the news in the papers will tell you far more than it is prudent for me to say; and for this once I will observe your rule of political silence. The Austrians wish that the Neapolitans and Piedmontese would do the same.

We have seen a few more people than usual this winter, and have made a very interesting acquaintance with a Greek Prince, perfectly acquainted with ancient literature, and full of enthusiasm for the liberties and improvement of his country. Mary has been a Greek student for several months, and is reading *Antigone* with our turbaned friend, who, in return, is taught English. Claire has passed the Carnival at Florence, and has been preternaturally gay. I have had a severe ophthalmia, and have read or written little this winter; and have made acquaintance in an obscure convent with the only Italian for whom I ever felt any interest.[1]

[1] This was of course, as stated by Peacock, the Lady Emilia Viviani.

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I want you to do something for me: that is, to get me two pounds' worth of Tassi's gems, in Leicester Square, the prettiest, according to your taste; among them, the head of Alexander; and to get me two seals engraved and set, one smaller, and the other handsomer; the device a dove with outspread wings, and this motto round it:

Μάντις εἰμ' ἐσθλῶν ἀγώνων.

Mary desires her best regards; and I remain, my dear Peacock, ever most sincerely yours,

P. B. S.[1]

LETTER LXVII.

To HENRY REVELEY.

Pisa, Tuesday, 1 *o'clock,* 17*th April,* 1821.

MY DEAR HENRY,

Our ducking last night has added fire, instead of quenching the nautical ardour which produced it; and I consider it a good omen in any enterprise, that it begins in evil; as being more probable that it will end in good. I hope *you* have not suffered from it. I am

[1] Peacock gives the following extract from a postscript by Mrs. Shelley: "Am I not lucky to have got so good a master? I have finished the two plays of *Œdipus*, and am now reading the *Antigone*. The name of the Prince is Αλέξανδρος Μαυροκόρδατος. He can read English perfectly well." Probably these readings with Prince Mavrocordato brought back to Shelley's mind the words from *Œdipus at Colonos* which he asks to have engraved on two seals, and which he adopted as a motto for the title-page of *Hellas*.

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rather feverish, but very well as to the side, whence I expected the worst consequences. I send you directions for the complete equipment of our boat, since you have so kindly promised to undertake it. In putting into execution, a little more or less expense in so trifling an affair, is to be disregarded. I need not say that the approaching season invites expedition. You can put her in hand immediately, and write the day on which we may come for her.

We expect with impatience the arrival of our false friends, who have so long cheated us with delay; and Mary unites with me in desiring, that, as *you* participated equally in the crime, you should not be omitted in the expiation.

All good be with you.—Adieu.

Yours faithfully,

S.

Williams desires to be kindly remembered to you, and begs to present his compliments to Mr. and Mrs. G., and —heaven knows what.

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LETTER LXVIII.

To HENRY REVELEY.

Pisa, April 19th [1821].

MY DEAR HENRY,

The rullock, or place for the oar, ought not to be placed where the oar-pins are now, but ought to be nearer to the mast; as near as possible, indeed, so that the rower has room to sit. In addition let a false keel be made in this shape, so as to be four inches deep at the stern, and to decrease towards the prow. It may be as thin as you please.

Tell Mr. and Mrs. G—— that I have read the Numancia,[1] and after wading through the singular stupidity of the first act, began to be greatly delighted, and, at length, interested in a very high degree, by the power of the writer in awakening pity and admiration, in which I hardly know by whom he is excelled. There is little, I allow, in a strict sense, to be called *poetry* in this play; but the command of language, and the harmony of versification, is so great as to deceive one into an idea that it is poetry.

Adieu.—We shall see you soon.

Yours ever truly,

S.

[1] For an analysis of this play of Cervantes see Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature* (London, 1863), Vol. II, pp. 105 to 111.

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LETTER LXIX.

To —— ——.[1]

Spring, 1821.

It is probable that you will be earnest to employ the sacred talisman of language. To acquire these you are now necessitated to sacrifice many hours of the time, when, instead of being conversant with particles and verbs, your nature incites you to contemplation and inquiry concerning the objects which they conceal. You desire to enjoy the beauties of eloquence and poetry—to sympathize in the original language with the institutors and martyrs of ancient freedom. The generous and inspiriting examples of philosophy and virtue, you desire intimately to know and feel; not as mere facts detailing names, and dates, and motions of the human body, but clothed in the very language of the actors,—that language dictated by and expressive of the passions and principles that governed their conduct. Facts are not what we want to know in poetry, in history, in the lives of individual men, in satire, or in panegyric. They are

[1] Mrs. Shelley printed this fragment as a note to Letter XL (p. 144 of this volume), with the following remarks:—

"I subjoin here a fragment of a letter, I know not to whom addressed; it is to a woman—which shows how, worshipping as Shelley did the spirit of the literature of ancient Greece, he considered that this could be found only in its original language, and did not consider that time wasted which a person who had pretensions, intellectual culture, and enthusiasm, spent in acquiring them."

Knowing how warm an interest Shelley took in the welfare of the late Miss Claire Clairmont, and that he wrote her other letters in much the same strain as this, I am disposed to think she was the recipient or intended recipient of this; but I have no direct evidence on the subject.

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the mere divisions, the arbitrary points on which we hang, and to which we refer those delicate and evanescent hues of mind, which language delights and instructs us in precise proportion as it expresses. What is a translation of Homer into English? A person who is ignorant of Greek, need only look at Paradise Lost or the tragedy of Lear translated into French, to obtain an analogical conception of its worthless and miserable inadequacy. Tacitus, or Livius, or Herodotus, are equally undelightful and uninstructive in translation. You require to know and to be intimate with those persons who have acted a distinguished part to benefit, to enlighten, or even to pervert and injure humankind. Before you can do this, four years are yet to be consumed in the discipline of the ancient languages, and those of modern Europe, which you only imperfectly know, and which conceal from your intimacy such names as Ariosto, Tasso, Petrarch, and Macchiavelli; or Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, &c. The French language you, like every other respectable woman, already know; and if the great name of Rousseau did not redeem it, it would have been perhaps as well that you had remained entirely ignorant of it.

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LETTER LXX.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Bagni, Tuesday Evening
(*June 5th*, 1821).

My dear Friends,

We anxiously expect your arrival at the Baths; but as I am persuaded that you will spend as much time with us as you can save from your necessary occupations before your departure, I will forbear to vex you with importunity. My health does not permit me to spend many hours from home. I have been engaged these last days in composing a poem on the death of Keats, which will shortly be finished; and I anticipate the pleasure of reading it to you, as some of the very few persons who will be interested in it and understand it. It is a highly-wrought *piece of art*, and perhaps better, in point of composition, than anything I have written.

I have obtained a purchaser for some of the articles of your three lists, a catalogue of which I subjoin. I shall do my utmost to get more; could you not send me a complete list of your *furniture*, as I have had inquiries made about chests of drawers, &c.

* * * * * *

My unfortunate box! it contained a chaos of the elements of Charles I. If the idea of the *creator* had been packed up with them, it would have shared the

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same fate ; and that, I am afraid, has undergone another sort of shipwreck.

* * * * * *

Very faithfully and affectionately yours,

S.

LETTER LXXI.

To JOHN GISBORNE.

Pisa, Saturday (June 16th, 1821).

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have received the heart-rending account of the closing scene of the great genius whom envy and ingratitude scourged out of the world.[1] I do not think that if I had seen it before, I could have composed my poem. The enthusiasm of the imagination would have overpowered the sentiment.

As it is, I have finished my Elegy; and this day I send it to the press at Pisa. You shall have a copy the moment it is completed. I think it will please you. I have dipped my pen in consuming fire for his destroyers; otherwise the style is calm and solemn.

Pray, when shall we see you ? Or are the streams of Helicon less salutary than sea-bathing for the nerves ? Give us as much as you can before you go to England, and rather divide the term than not come soon.

[1] The account alluded to will be found in the Appendix.

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Mrs. * * * wishes that none of the books, desk, &c., should be packed up with the piano; but that they should be sent, one by one, by Pepi. Address them to *me* at her house. She desired me to have them addressed to *me*, why I know not.

A droll circumstance has occurred. Queen Mab, a poem written by me when very young, in the most furious style, with long notes against Jesus Christ, and God the Father, and the king, and bishops, and marriage, and the devil knows what, is just published by one of the low booksellers in the Strand, against my wish and consent, and all the people are at loggerheads about it. Horace Smith gives me this account. You may imagine how much I am amused. For the sake of a dignified appearance, however, and really because I wish to protest against all the bad poetry in it, I have given orders to say that it is all done against my desire, and have directed my attorney to apply to Chancery for an injunction, which he will not get.

I am pretty ill, I thank you, just now; but I hope you are better.

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

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LETTER LXXII.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Bagni, Friday Night
(July 13th, 1821).

My dear Friends,

I have been expecting every day a writ to attend at your court at Guebhard's, whence you know it is settled that I should conduct you hither to spend your last days in Italy. A thousand thanks for your maps; in return for which I send you the only copy of Adonais the printer has yet delivered. I wish I could say, as Glaucus could, in the exchange for the arms of Diomed, —ἑκατόμβοἰ ἐννεαβοίων.

* * * * * *

I will only remind you of Faust; my desire for the conclusion of which is only exceeded by my desire to welcome you. Do you observe any traces of him in the poem I send you? Poets—the best of them, are a very cameleonic race; they take the colour not only of what they feed on, but of the very leaves under which they pass.

Mary is just on the verge of finishing her novel[1]; but it cannot be in time for you to take to England.—Farewell.

Most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

[1] *Valperga.*

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LETTER LXXIII.

To Mr. and Mrs. GISBORNE.

Bagni, July 19th [1821].

My dearest Friends,

I am fully repaid for the painful emotions from which some verses of my poem sprung, by your sympathy and approbation—which is all the reward I expect—and as much as I desire. It is not for me to judge whether, in the high praise your feelings assign me, you are right or wrong. The poet and the man are two different natures; though they exist together, they may be unconscious of each other, and incapable of deciding on each other's powers and efforts by any reflex act. The decision of the cause, whether or no *I* am a poet, is removed from the present time to the hour when our posterity shall assemble; but the court is a very severe one, and I fear that the verdict will be, "Guilty—death!"

I shall be with you on the first summons. I hope that the time you have reserved for us, "this bank and shoal of time," is not so short as you once talked of.

In haste, most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

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LETTER LXXIV.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(Bagni di Pisa).

Tuesday, Lione Bianco, Florence
(*August* 1*st*, 1821).

My dearest Love,

I shall not return this evening; nor, unless I have better success, to-morrow. I have seen many houses, but very few within the compass of our powers; and, even in those which seem to suit, nothing is more difficult than to bring the proprietors to terms. I congratulate myself on having taken the season in time, as there is great expectation of Florence being full next winter. I shall do my utmost to return to-morrow evening. You may expect me about ten or eleven o'clock, as I shall purposely be late, to spare myself the excessive heat.

The Gisbornes (four o'clock, Tuesday,) are just set out in a diligence-and-four, for Bologna. They have promised to write from Paris. I spent three hours this morning principally in the contemplation of the Niobe, and of a favourite Apollo; all worldly thoughts and cares seem to vanish from before the sublime emotions such spectacles create; and I am deeply impressed with the great difference of happiness enjoyed by those who live at a distance from these incarnations of all that the finest minds have conceived of beauty, and those who can resort to their company at pleasure. What should

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we think if we were forbidden to read the great writers who have left us their works? And yet to be forbidden to live at Florence or Rome, is an evil of the same kind, and hardly of less magnitude.

I am delighted to hear that the W.'s are with you. I am convinced that Williams must persevere in the use of the doccia. Give my most affectionate remembrances to them. I shall know all the houses in Florence, and can give W. a good account of them all. You have not sent my passport, and I must get home as I can. I suppose you did not receive my note.

I grudge my sequins for a carriage; but I have suffered from the sun and the fatigue, and dare not expose myself to that which is necessary for house-hunting.

Kiss little babe, and how is he? but I hope to see him fast asleep to-morrow night. And pray, dearest Mary, have some of your novel[1] prepared for my return.

Your ever affectionate

S.

[1] *Valperga.*

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LETTER LXXV.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(Bagni di Pisa).

Bologna, Agosto 6. [1821.]

Dearest mine,

I am at Bologna, and the caravella is ordered for Ravenna. I have been detained, by making an embarrassing and inexplicable arrangement, more than twelve hours; or I should have arrived at Bologna last night instead of this morning.

Though I have travelled all night at the rate of two miles and a half an hour, in a little open calesso, I am perfectly well in health. One would think that I were the spaniel of Destiny, for the more she knocks me about, the more I fawn on her. We had an overturn about day-break; the old horse stumbled, and threw me and the fat vetturino into a slope of meadow, over an hedge. My angular figure stuck where it was pitched; but my vetturino's spherical form rolled fairly to the bottom of the hill, and that with so few symptoms of reluctance in the life that animated it, that my ridicule (for it was the drollest sight in the world) was suppressed by my fear that the poor devil had been hurt. But he was very well, and we continued our journey with great success.

* * * * * *

My love to the Williams's. Kiss my pretty one, and accept an affectionate one for yourself from me. The

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chaise waits. I will write the first night from Ravenna at length.

Yours ever,

S.

LETTER LXXVI.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(bagni di pisa).

Ravenna, August 7, 1821.

My dearest Mary,

I arrived last night at ten o'clock, and sate up talking with Lord Byron until five this morning. I then went to sleep, and now awake at eleven, and having despatched my breakfast as quick as possible, mean to devote the interval until twelve, when the post departs, to you.

Lord Byron is very well, and was delighted to see me. He has in fact completely recovered his health, and lives a life totally the reverse of that which he led at Venice. He has a permanent sort of liaison with Contessa Guiccioli, who is now at Florence, and seems from her letters to be a very amiable woman. She is waiting there until something shall be decided as to their emigration to Switzerland or stay in Italy; which is yet undetermined on either side. She was compelled to escape from the Papal territory in great haste, as measures had already been taken to place her in a convent, where she would have been unrelentingly confined for life. The oppression of the marriage contract, as existing in the laws and

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opinions of Italy, though less frequently exercised, is far severer than that of England. I tremble to think of what poor Emilia is destined to.

Lord Byron had almost destroyed himself in Venice: his state of debility was such that he was unable to digest any food, he was consumed by hectic fever, and would speedily have perished, but for this attachment, which has reclaimed him from the excesses into which he threw himself from carelessness and pride, rather than taste. Poor fellow! he is now quite well, and immersed in politics and literature. He has given me a number of the most interesting details on the former subject, but we will not speak of them in a letter. Fletcher is here; and as if, like a shadow, he waxed and waned with the substance of his master, Fletcher also has recovered his good looks, and from amidst the unseasonable grey hairs, a fresh harvest of flaxen locks put forth.

We talked a great deal of poetry, and such matters last night; and as usual differed, and I think more than ever. He affects to patronize a system of criticism fit for the production of mediocrity, and although all his fine poems and passages have been produced in defiance of this system, yet I recognize the pernicious effects of it in the Doge of Venice; and it will cramp and limit his future efforts however great they may be, unless he gets rid of it. I have read only parts of it, or rather he himself read them to me, and gave me the plan of the whole.

* * * * * *

Lord Byron has also told me of a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly; because it exhibits a degree of desperate and wicked malice for which I am at a loss

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to account. When I hear such things my patience and my philosophy are put to a severe proof, whilst I refrain from seeking out some obscure hiding-place, where the countenance of man may never meet me more.

* * * * * *

Imagine my despair of good, imagine how it is possible that one of so weak and sensitive a nature as mine can run further the gauntlet through this hellish society of men. *You* should write to the Hoppners a letter refuting the charge, in case you believe, and know, and can prove that it is false; stating the grounds and proofs of your belief. I need not dictate what you should say; nor, I hope, inspire you with warmth to rebut a charge, which you only can effectually rebut. If you will send the letter to me here, I will forward it to the Hoppners. Lord Byron is not up, I do not know the Hoppners' address, and I am anxious not to lose a post.[1]

[1] Taking this passage in connexion with that about *The Literary Gazette* in the next letter, it would seem as if Byron had heard from Consul-General Hoppner and his wife a most atrocious calumny about Shelley, and had with characteristic malice taken care to apprise Shelley of it. Those who are curious about literary garbage may get some idea of the tale by reading the review of Clarke's edition of *Queen Mab* in *The Literary Gazette* for the 19th of May, 1821.

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LETTER LXXVII.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(BAGNI DI PISA).

Ravenna, Thursday, 9th August, 1821.

My dearest Mary,

I wrote to you yesterday, and I begin another letter to-day, without knowing exactly when I can send it, as I am told the post only goes once a week. I dare say the subject of the latter half of my letter gave you pain, but it was necessary to look the affair in the face, and the only satisfactory answer to the calumny must be given by you, and could be given by you alone. This is evidently the source of the violent denunciations of the Literary Gazette, in themselves contemptible enough, and only to be regarded as effects, which shew us their cause, which until we put off our mortal nature, we never can despise—that is the belief of persons who have known and seen you, that you are guilty of the most enormous crimes. A certain degree and a certain kind of infamy is to be borne, and in fact is the best compliment which an exalted nature can receive from the filthy world of which it is its Hell to be a part—but this sort of thing exceeds the measure—and even if it were only for the sake of our dear Percy I should take some pains to suppress it.—

After having sent my letter to the post yesterday, I went out to see some of the antiquities of this place; which appear to be remarkable. This city was once of vast extent, and the traces of its remains are to be

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found more than four miles from the gate of the modern town. The sea, which once came close to it, has now retired to the distance of four miles, leaving a melancholy extent of marshes, interspersed with patches of cultivation, and towards the sea shore with pine forests, which have followed the retrocession of the Adriatic, and the roots of which are absolutely washed by its waves. The level of the sea and of this tract of country correspond so nearly, that a ditch dug to a few feet in depth is immediately filled up with sea water. All the antient buildings have been choked up to the height of from five to twenty feet by the deposit of the sea, and of the inundations, which are frequent in the winter. I went in L. B.'s carriage, first to the Chiesa San Vitale, which is certainly one of the most antient churches in Italy. It is a rotunda supported upon buttresses and pilasters of white marble; the ill effect of which is somewhat relieved by an interior row of columns. The dome is very high and narrow. The whole church, in spite of the elevation of the soil, is very high for its breadth, and is of a very peculiar and striking construction. In the section of one of the large tables of marble with which the church is lined, they shewed me the *perfect figure*, as perfect as if it had been painted, of a capuchin friar, which resulted merely from the shadings and the position of the stains in the marble. This is what may be called a pure anticipated cognition of a Capuchin.

I then went to the tomb of Theodosius, which has now been dedicated to the Virgin, without however any change in its original appearance. It is about a mile from the present city. This building is more than half overwhelmed in the elevated soil, although a portion of the lower story has been excavated, and is filled with

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brackish and stinking water, and a sort of vaporous darkness, and troops of prodigious frogs. It is a remarkable piece of architecture, and without belonging to a period when the antient taste yet survived, bears nevertheless a certain impression of that taste. It consists of two stories; the lower supported on Doric arches, and pilasters, and a simple entablature. The other circular within, and polygonal outside, and roofed with one single mass of ponderous stone, for it is evidently one, and Heaven alone knows how they contrived to lift it to that height. It is a sort of flattish dome, rough-wrought within by the chisel, from which the Northern conquerors tore the plates of silver that adorned it, and polished without, with things like handles appended to it, which were also wrought out of the solid stone, and to which I suppose the ropes were affixed to draw it up. You ascend externally into the second story by a flight of stone steps, which are modern.

The next place I went to, was a church called *la chiesa di Sant' Appollinare*, which is a Basilica, and built by one, I forget whom, of the Christian Emperors; it is a long church, with a roof like a barn, and supported by twenty-four columns of the finest white marble, with an altar of jasper, and four columns of jasper and giallo antico, supporting the roof of the tabernacle, which are said to be of immense value. It is something like that church (I forget the name of it) we saw at Rome, fuore delle mura.[1] I suppose the emperor stole these columns, which seem not at all to belong to the place they occupy. Within the city, near the church of San Vitale, there is to be seen the tomb of the Empress Galla Placidia,

[1] Mrs. Shelley says—"San Paulo fuore delle mura—burnt down, and its beautiful columns calcined by the fire, in 1823—now rebuilt."

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daughter of Theodosius the Great, together with those of her husband Constantius, her brother Honorius, and her son Valentinian—all Emperors. The tombs are massy cases of marble, adorned with rude and tasteless sculpture of lambs, and other Christian emblems, with scarcely a trace of the antique. It seems to have been one of the first effects of the Christian religion, to destroy the power of producing beauty in art. These tombs are placed in a sort of vaulted chamber, wrought over with rude mosaic, which is said to have been built in 1300. I have yet seen no more of Ravenna.

Friday. [*10th August*, 1821.]

We ride out in the evening, through the pine forests which divide this city from the sea. Our way of life is this, and I have accommodated myself to it without much difficulty:—L. B. gets up at two, breakfasts; we talk, read, &c., until six; then we ride, and dine at eight; and after dinner sit talking till four or five in the morning. I get up at twelve, and am now devoting the interval between my rising and his, to you.

L. B. is greatly improved in every respect. In genius, in temper, in moral views, in health, in happiness. The connexion with la Guiccioli has been an inestimable benefit to him. He lives in considerable splendour, but within his income, which is now about £4000 a year, £100 of which he devotes to purposes of charity. He has had mischievous passions, but these he seems to have subdued, and he is becoming, what he should be, a virtuous man. The interest which he took in the politics of Italy, and the actions he performed in consequence of it, are subjects not fit to be *written*, but are such as will delight and surprise you. He is not yet decided to go

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to Switzerland—a place, indeed, little fitted for him: the gossip and the cabals of those anglicized coteries would torment him, as they did before, and might exasperate him to a relapse of libertinism, which he says he plunged into not from taste, but despair. La Guiccioli and her brother (who is L. B.'s friend and confidant, and acquiesces perfectly in her connexion with him,) wish to go to Switzerland; as L. B. says, merely from the novelty of the pleasure of travelling. L. B. prefers Tuscany or Lucca, and is trying to persuade them to adopt his views. He has made *me* write a long letter to her to engage her to remain—an odd thing enough for an utter stranger to write on subjects of the utmost delicacy to his friend's mistress. But it seems destined that I am always to have some active part in every body's affairs whom I approach. I have set down in lame Italian, the strongest reasons I can think of against the Swiss emigration—to tell you truth, I should be very glad to accept, as my fee, his establishment in Tuscany. Ravenna is a miserable place; the people are barbarous and wild, and their language the most infernal patois that you can imagine. He would be, in every respect, better among the Tuscans. I am afraid he would not like Florence, on account of the English there. What think you of Lucca for him? He would like Pisa were it not for * * *. Gunpowder and fire ought to be kept at a respectable distance from each other.

There is Lucca, Florence, Pisa, Siena, and I think nothing more. What think you of Prato, or Pistoia, for him?—no Englishman approaches those towns; but I am afraid no house could be found good enough for him in that region.——I have not yet seen Allegra, but shall tomorrow or next day: as I shall ride over to Bagnacavallo for that purpose.

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He has read to me one of the unpublished cantos of Don Juan, which is astonishingly fine. It sets him not only above, but far above, all the poets of the day—every word has the stamp of immortality. I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, as well I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending. This canto is in the style, but totally, and sustained with incredible ease and power, like the end of the second canto. There is not a word which the most rigid assertor of the dignity of human nature could desire to be cancelled. It fulfils, in a certain degree, what I have long preached of producing —something wholly new and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful. It may be vanity, but I think I see the trace of my earnest exhortations to him to create something wholly new. He has finished his *life* up to the present time, and given it to Moore, with liberty for Moore to sell it for the best price he can get, with condition that the bookseller should publish it after his death. Moore has sold it to Murray for *two thousand pounds*. I wish I had been in time to have interceded for a part of it for poor Hunt. I have spoken to him of Hunt, but not with a direct view of demanding a contribution; and, though I am sure that if asked it would not be refused—yet, there is something in me that makes it impossible. Lord Byron and I are excellent friends, and were I reduced to poverty, or were I a writer who had no claims to an higher station than I possess—or did I possess an higher than I deserve, we should appear in all things as such, and I would freely ask him any favour. Such is not now the case. The dæmon of mistrust and pride lurks between two persons in our situation, poisoning the freedom of our intercourse. This is a tax and a heavy one, which we must pay for being human. I think the

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fault is not on my side, nor is it likely, I being the weaker. I hope that in the next world these things will be better managed. What is passing in the heart of another, rarely escapes the observation of one who is a strict anatomist of his own.

Write to me at Florence, where I shall remain a day at least, and send me letters, or news of letters. How is my little darling? And how are you, and how do you get on with your book? Be severe in your corrections, and expect severity from me, your sincere admirer. I flatter myself you have composed something unequalled in its kind, and that, not content with the honours of your birth and your hereditary aristocracy, you will add still higher renown to your name. Expect me at the end of my appointed time. I do not think I shall be detained. Is Claire with you, or is she coming? Have you heard anything of my poor Emilia, from whom I got a letter the day of my departure, saying that her marriage was deferred for a *very short* time, on account of the illness of her sposo. How are the Williams's, and Williams especially? Give my very kindest love to them.

Lord B. has here splendid apartments in the palace of his mistress's husband, who is one of the richest men in Italy. *She* is divorced, with an allowance of 1200 crowns a-year, a miserable pittance from a man who has 120,000 a-year.—Here are two monkeys, five cats, eight dogs, and ten horses, all of whom, (except the horses,) walk about the house like the masters of it. *Tita* the Venetian is here, and operates as my valet; a fine fellow, with a prodigious black beard, and who has stabbed two or three people, and is the most good-natured looking fellow I ever saw.

We have good rumours of the Greeks here, and a

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Russian war. I hardly wish the Russians to take any part in it. My maxim is with Æschylus:—τὸ δυσσεβὲς —μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει, σφετέρᾳ δ' εἴκοτα γεννᾷ. There is a Greek exercise for you. How should slaves produce anything but tyranny—even as the seed produces the plant?

Adieu, dear Mary,

Yours affectionately,

S.

This is sent express to Florence.

LETTER LXXVIII.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Ravenna, August (probably 10th), 1821.

My dear Peacock,

I received your last letter just as I was setting off from the Bagni on a visit to Lord Byron at this place. Many thanks for all your kind attention to my accursed affairs. . . . . .

I have sent you by the Gisbornes a copy of the *Elegy on Keats*. The subject, I know, will not please you; but the composition of the poetry, and the taste in which it is written, I do not think bad. You and the enlightened public will judge. Lord Byron is in excellent cue both of health and spirits. He has got rid of all those melancholy and degrading habits which he indulged at Venice. He lives with one woman, a lady of rank here,

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to whom he is attached, and who is attached to him, and is in every respect an altered man. He has written three more cantos of *Don Juan*. I have yet only heard the fifth, and I think that every word of it is pregnant with immortality. I have not seen his late plays, except *Marino Faliero*, which is very well, but not so transcendently fine as the *Don Juan*. Lord Byron gets up at two. I get up, quite contrary to my usual custom (but one must sleep or die, like Southey's sea-snake in Kehama), at twelve. After breakfast, we sit talking till six. From six till eight we gallop through the pine forests which divide Ravenna from the sea; we then come home and dine, and sit up gossiping till six in the morning. I don't suppose this will kill me in a week or fortnight, but I shall not try it longer. Lord B.'s establishment consists, besides servants, of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon; and all these, except the horses, walk about the house, which every now and then resounds with their unarbitrated quarrels, as if they were the masters of it. Lord B. thinks you wrote a pamphlet signed *John Bull;* he says he knew it by the style resembling *Melincourt*, of which he is a great admirer. I read it, and assured him that it could not possibly be yours.[1] I write nothing,

[1] Most probably Shelley's partiality for me and my book put too favourable a construction on what Lord Byron may have said. Lord Byron told Captain Medwin that a friend of Shelley's had written a novel, of which he had forgotten the name, founded on his bear. He described it sufficiently to identify it, and Captain Medwin supplied the title in a note: but assuredly, when I condensed Lord Monboddo's views of the humanity of the Oran Outang into the character of *Sir Oran Haut-ton*, I thought neither of Lord Byron's bear nor of Caligula's horse. But Lord Byron was much in the habit of fancying that all the world was spinning on his pivot. As to the pamphlet signed John Bull, I certainly did not write it. I never even saw it, and do not know what it was about. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

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and probably shall write no more. It offends me to see my name classed among those who have no name. If I cannot be something better, I had rather be nothing. . . . and the accursed cause to the downfall of which I dedicated what powers I may have had—flourishes like a cedar and covers England with its boughs. My motive was never the infirm desire of fame; and if I should continue an author, I feel that I should desire it. This cup is justly given to one only of an age; indeed, participation would make it worthless: and unfortunate they who seek it and find it not.

I congratulate you—I hope I ought to do so—on your expected stranger. He is introduced into a rough world. My regards to Hogg, and Colson if you see him.

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

After I have sealed my letter, I find that my enumeration of the animals in this Circæan Palace was defective, and that in a material point. I have just met on the grand staircase five peacocks, two guinea-hens, and an Egyptian crane. I wonder who all these animals were, before they were changed into these shapes.

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LETTER LXXIX

To Mrs. SHELLEY.

Saturday—Ravenna. [*August 11th*, 1821.]

My dear Mary,

You will be surprised to hear that L. B. has decided upon coming to *Pisa*, in case he shall be able, with my assistance, to prevail upon his mistress to remain in Italy, of which I think there is little doubt. He wishes for a large and magnificent house, but he has furniture of his own, which he would send from Ravenna. Inquire if any of the large palaces are to be let. We discussed Prato, Pistoia, Lucca, &c., but they would not suit him so well as Pisa, to which indeed he shews a decided preference. So let it be! Florence he objects to, on account of the prodigious influx of English.

I don't think this circumstance ought to make any difference in our own plans with respect to this winter in Florence, because we could easily reassume our station, with the spring, at Pugnano or the baths, in order to enjoy the society of the noble lord. But do you consider this point and write to me your full opinion at the Florence Post-office.

I have not yet seen Allegra—indeed today I suffer so much from the pain in my side, brought on, I believe, by this accursed water, that I do not think myself equal to a ride of 24 miles. In other respects I am pretty well, and my spirits are much improved:—they had been

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improving indeed before I left the Baths, after the deep dejection of the early part of the year.

I am reading Anastasius.[1] One would think that L. B. had taken his idea of the three last Cantos of Don Juan from this book. That of course has nothing to do with the merit of this latter, poetry having nothing to do with the invention of facts.—It is a very powerful and a very entertaining novel, and a faithful picture they say of modern Greek manners.—I have read L. B.'s letter to Bowles—some good things—but he ought not to write mere criticism.

You will receive a long letter, sent with one of L. B.'s, express to Florence.—I write this in haste.

Yours most affectionately,

S.

[1] *Anastasius: or, Memoirs of a Greek; written at the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (3 volumes, London, Murray, 1819). Though in the first place published anonymously, this book is now well known to be from the pen of Thomas Hope. It created great interest when issued, and maintained a place in public esteem so far as to be included in Bentley's "Standard Novels," but it is now unduly left out of sight.

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LETTER LXXX.[1]

To Mrs. SHELLEY.

Ravenna, Tuesday, August 14th, 1821.

My dearest Love,

I accept your kind present of your picture; I wish you would get it prettily framed for me.—I will wear for your sake upon my heart this image which is ever present in my mind.

I have only two minutes to write. I am just setting off to see the Allegrina, and the post is also setting off. I shall leave this place on Thursday or Friday morning. —You would forgive me for my longer stay, if you knew the fighting I have had to make it so short.—I need not say where my own feelings impel me.

It still remains fixed that L. B. should come to Tuscany, and if possible Pisa—but more of that tomorrow.

Your faithful and affectionate

S.

[1] Dated *Tuesday, August 15th*, 1821, in Mrs. Shelley's editions; but the 15th was a Wednesday.

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LETTER LXXXI.

To Mrs. SHELLEY.

Wednesday, Ravenna. [*August 15th*, 1821.]

My dearest Love,

I write, though I doubt whether I shall not arrive before this letter; as the post only leaves Ravenna once a week, on Saturdays, and as I hope to set out tomorrow evening by the courier. But as I must necessarily stay a day at Florence, and as the natural incidents of travelling may prevent me from taking my intended advantage of the couriers, it is probable that this letter will arrive first. Besides, as I will explain, I am not *yet* quite my own master. But that by and bye. I do not think it necessary to tell you of my impatience to return to you and my little darling, or the disappointment with which I have prolonged my absence from you. I am happy to think that you are not quite alone.

Lord Byron is still decided upon Tuscany; and such is his impatience, that he has desired me—as if I should not arrive in time—to write to you to inquire for the best unfurnished palace in Pisa, and to enter upon a treaty for it. It is better not to be on the Lung' Arno; but, in fact, there is no such hurry, and as I shall see you so soon, it is not worth while to trouble yourself about it.

* * * * * *

I told you I had written by L. B.'s desire to la Guiccioli, to dissuade her and her family from Switzerland.

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Her answer is this moment arrived, and my representation seems to have reconciled them to the unfitness of that step. At the conclusion of a letter, full of all the fine things she says she has heard of me, is this request, which I transcribe;—"*Signore—la vostra bontà mi fa ardita di chiedervi un favore—me lo accorderete voi? Non partite da Ravenna senza Milord.*" Of course, being now, by all the laws of knighthood, captive to a lady's request, I shall only be at liberty on *my parole*, until Lord Byron is settled at Pisa. I shall reply, of course, that the *boon* is granted, and that if her lover is reluctant to quit Ravenna, after I have made arrangements for receiving him at Pisa, I am bound to place myself in the same situation as now, to assail him with importunities to rejoin her. Of this there is, fortunately, no need; and I need not tell you there is no fear that this chivalric submission of mine to the great general laws of antique courtesy, against which I never rebel, and which is my religion, should interfere with my quick returning, and long remaining with you, dear girl.

I have seen Dante's tomb, and worshipped the sacred spot. The building and its accessories are comparatively modern, but, the urn itself, and the tablet of marble, with his portrait in relief, are evidently of equal antiquity with his death. The countenance has all the marks of being taken from his own; the lines are strongly marked, far more than the portraits, which, however, it resembles; except, indeed, the eye, which is half closed, and reminded me of Pacchiani. It was probably taken after death. I saw the library, and some specimens of the earliest illuminated printing from the press of *Faust*. They are on vellum, and of an execution little inferior to that of the present day.

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We ride out every evening as usual, and practise pistol-shooting at a pumpkin; and I am not sorry to observe, that I approach towards my noble friend's exactness of aim. The water here is villanous, and I have suffered tortures; but I now drink nothing but alcalescent water, and am much relieved. I have the greatest trouble to get away; and L. B., as a reason for my stay, has urged, that without either me or the Guiccioli, he will certainly fall into his old habits. I then talk, and he listens to reason; and I earnestly hope that he is too well aware of the terrible and degrading consequences of his former mode of life, to be in danger from the short interval of temptation that will be left him. L. B. speaks with great kindness and interest of you, and seems to wish to see you.

Thursday, Ravenna. [*August 16th* 1821.]

I have received your letter with that to Mrs. Hoppner. I do not wonder, my dearest friend, that you should have been moved. I was at first, but speedily regained the indifference which the opinion of anything, or anybody, except our own consciousness, amply merits; and day by day shall more receive from me. I have not recopied your letter; such a measure would destroy its authenticity, but have given it to Lord Byron, who has engaged to send it with his own comments to the Hoppners. People do not hesitate, it seems, to make themselves panders and accomplices to slander, for the Hoppners had exacted from Lord Byron that these accusations should be concealed from *me*. Lord Byron is not a man to keep a secret, good or bad; but in openly confessing that he has not done so, he must observe a certain delicacy, and therefore he wished to send the letter himself, and indeed this adds weight to your representations. Have you seen the article in

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the Literary Gazette on me? They evidently allude to some story of this kind—however cautious the Hoppners have been in preventing the calumniated person from asserting his justification, you know too much of the world not to be certain that this was the utmost limit of their caution. So much for nothing.

Lord Byron is immediately coming to Pisa. He will set off the moment I can get him a house. Who would have imagined this? Our first thought ought to be ——, our second our own plans. The hesitation in your letter about Florence has communicated itself to me; although I hardly see what we can do about Horace Smith, to whom our attentions are so due, and would be so useful. If I do not arrive before this long scrawl, write something to Florence to decide me. I shall certainly not without strong reasons at present *sign* the agreement for the old codger's house; although the extreme beauty and fitness of the place, should we decide on Florence, might well overbalance the objection of your deaf visitor. One thing—with Lord Byron and the people we know at Pisa, we should have a security and protection, which seems to be more questionable at Florence. But I do not think that this consideration ought to weigh. What think you of remaining at Pisa? The Williams's would probably be induced to stay there if we did; Hunt would certainly stay, at least this winter, near us, should he emigrate at all; Lord Byron and his Italian friends would remain quietly there; and Lord Byron has certainly a great regard for us—the regard of such a man is worth,—*some* of the tribute we must pay to the base passions of humanity in any intercourse with those within their circle; he is better worth it than those on whom we bestow it from mere custom. The —— are there,

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and as far as solid affairs are concerned, are my friends. . . . . At Pisa I need not distil my water—if I *can* distil it anywhere. Last winter I suffered less from my painful disorder than the winter I spent at Florence. The arguments for Florence you know, and they are very weighty; judge (*I know you like the job*), which scale is overbalanced.

My greatest content would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you and our child to a solitary island in the sea, would build a boat, and shut upon my retreat the flood-gates of the world. I would read no reviews, and talk with no authors. If I dared trust my imagination, it would tell me that there are one or two chosen companions beside yourself whom I should desire. But to this I would not listen—where two or three are gathered together, the devil is among them. And good, far more than evil impulses, love, far more than hatred, has been to me, except as you have been its object, the source of all sorts of mischief. So on this plan, I would be *alone*, and would devote either to oblivion or to future generations, the overflowings of a mind which, timely withdrawn from the contagion, should be kept fit for no baser object. But this it does not appear that we shall do.

The other side of the alternative (for a medium ought not to be adopted) is to form for ourselves a society of our own class, as much as possible, in intellect or in feelings; and to connect ourselves with the interests of that society. Our roots never struck so deeply as at Pisa, and the transplanted tree flourishes not. People who lead the lives which we led until last winter, are like a family of Wahabee Arabs, pitching their tent in the midst of London. We must do one thing or the

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other—for yourself, for our child, for our existence. The calumnies, the sources of which are probably deeper than we perceive, have ultimately for object the depriving us of the means of security and subsistence. You will easily perceive the gradations by which calumny proceeds to pretext, pretext to persecution, and persecution to the ban of fire and water. It is for this, and not because this or that fool, or the whole court of fools, curse and rail, that calumny is worth refuting or chastising.

LETTER LXXXII.

To THOMAS MEDWIN.

Pisa, August 22, 1821.

My dear Medwin,

How do you know that there are not seven distinct letters, patiently waiting with the Williams' seven lost letters, in the seven distinct post offices of Italy, whose contents you have never unveiled?—To write to you, hitherto would have been such an enterprise as if the oyster might undertake a correspondence with the eagle with orders that the billets should be left until called for on every promontory, thundercloud or mountain where the imperial bird might chance to pass.—

I have read with pleasure your elegant stanzas on Tivoli. What have you done with the compositions you have sent to England? I am particularly interested in the fate of the

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Stanzas on the lake of Geneva,[1] which seem to me the best you ever wrote. Have you any idea, according to my counsel, of disciplining your powers to any more serious undertaking? It might at once contribute to your happiness and your success: but consider, that Poetry, although its source is native and involuntary, requires in its developement severe attention.—

I am happy to hear that Adonais pleased you; I was considering how I could send you a copy:—nor am I less flattered by your friend Sir John's approbation.—I think I shall write again.—Whilst you were with me, that is during the latter period, and after you went away, I was harassed by some severe disquietudes, the causes of which are now I hope almost at an end.—What were the speculations which you say disturbed you? My mind is at peace respecting nothing so much as the constitution and mysteries of the great system of things—my curiosity on this point never amounts to solicitude.

Williams's play, if not a dramatic effort of the highest order, is one of the most manly, spirited, and natural pieces of writing I ever met with.—It is full of observation both of nature and of human nature; the theatrical effect and interest seems to be strong and well kept up. I confess that I was surprised at his success, and shall be still more so if it is not universally acknowledged on the stage.—It is worth fifty such things as Cornwall's Mirandola.

I am just returned from a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna, whom I have succeeded in rousing to attack

[1] The Stanzas on Tivoli I have not yet met with. Those on the Lake of Geneva are the first among the miscellaneous poems published with *Sketches in Hindoostan*; and they contain one line (p. 103) of an unmistakeable stamp,—

"Bursting the Anarch Custom's reign of night."

Whether adopted from Shelley or interpolated by him in his cousin's verses, who shall say?

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the Quarterly.—I believe he is about to migrate to this part of the world.

We see the Williams' every day—and my regard for them is every day increased. I hardly know which I like best, but I know that Jane is your favourite.—

We are yet undecided for Florence or Pisa this winter; but in either of these places I confidently expect that we shall see you.

Mary unites with me in best regards, and I remain, my dear Medwin,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I am delighted to hear that you have so entirely recovered your health.—I hardly dared to hope so last winter.

P.S.—I think you must have put up by mistake a MS. translation of the Symposium of Plato.[1]—If so pray contrive to send it me. I have one or two of your books which I keep till you give me instructions.

[1] See the postscript to Letter CVI. The missing MS. seems to have come to light at Pisa within a few days of Shelley's death.

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LETTER LXXXIII.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Pisa, August 26th, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Since I last wrote to you, I have been on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. The result of this visit was a determination on his part to come and live at Pisa; and I have taken the finest palace on the Lung' Arno for him. But the material part of my visit consists in a message which he desires me to give you, and which I think ought to add to your determination—for such a one I hope you have formed—of restoring your shattered health and spirits by a migration to these "regions mild of calm and serene air."

He proposes that you should come and go shares with him and me, in a periodical work, to be conducted here; in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions, and share the profits. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason it was never brought to bear. There can be no doubt that the *profits* of any scheme in which you and Lord Byron engage, must, from various, yet co-operating reasons, be very great. As for myself, I am, for the present, only a sort of link between you and him, until you can know each other and effectuate the arrangement; since (to intrust you with a secret which, for your sake, I withhold from Lord Byron) nothing would induce me to share in the profits, and still less in the borrowed splendour of such a

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partnership.[1] You and he, in different manners, would be equal, and would bring, in a different manner, but in the same proportion, equal stocks of reputation and success. Do not let my frankness with you, nor my belief that you deserve it more than Lord Byron, have the effect of deterring you from assuming a station in modern literature, which the universal voice of my contemporaries forbids me either to stoop or to aspire to. I am, and I desire to be, nothing.

I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey; because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation, in the worldly sense of the word; and I am as jealous for my friend as for myself. I, as you know, have it not:[2] but I suppose that at last I shall make up an impudent face, and ask Horace Smith to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me. I know I need only ask.

I think I have never told you how very much I like your Amyntas; it almost reconciles me to Translations. In another sense, I still demur. You might have written another such poem as the "Nymphs," with no great access of effort.[3] I am full of thoughts and plans, and

[1] Hunt says, "Mr. Shelley afterwards altered his mind; but he had a reserved intention underneath it, which he would have endeavoured to put in practice, had his friend allowed him."

[2] Mrs. Shelley omits this sentence.

[3] See note 3 at p. 4 of this volume. Hunt adds the following note to this passage: "In one of Lord Byron's letters, having a quarrel with the memory of Mr. Shelley, and being angry with me for loving it so entirely, his Lordship tells me that I was mistaken if I thought Mr. Shelley entertained a very high opinion of my poetry. I answered, that I had already had the mortification of making that discovery; upon which he expressed his vexation at having told it me. I did not add, that I believed Mr. Shelley's opinion of my poetry to have decreased since his becoming used to his Lordship's libels of his 'friends all round,' and that he had latterly exhibited an uneasy suspicion that his intimacy had had an ill effect upon his

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should do something if the feeble and irritable frame which incloses it was willing to obey the spirit. I fancy that then I should do great things. Before this you will have seen "Adonais." Lord Byron, I suppose from modesty on account of his being mentioned in it, did not say a word of "Adonais," though he was loud in his praise of "Prometheus": and, what you will not agree with him in, censure of the "Cenci." Certainly, if "Marino Faliero" is a drama, the "Cenci" is not: but that between ourselves. Lord Byron is reformed, as far as gallantry goes, and lives with a beautiful and sentimental Italian lady, who is as much attached to him as may be. I trust greatly to his intercourse with you, for his creed to become as pure as he thinks his conduct is. He has many generous and exalted qualities, but the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out.

* * * * * *

kindlier views of things in general. But I must own, that I never looked upon Mr. Shelley's real opinion of my poetry as anything very great; though his affection for me, and his sympathy with the world I lived in, poetical as well as political, sometimes led him to persuade himself otherwise. I suspect he had a very accurate notion of it; greater than what vulgar critics would think just, but as little as a due appreciation of poetry, properly so called, could admit."

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LETTER LXXXIV.

To HORATIO SMITH.

Pisa, Sept. 14th, 1821.

MY DEAR SMITH,

I cannot express the pain and disappointment with which I learn the change of your plans, no less than the afflicting cause of it. Florence will no longer have any attractions for me this winter, and I shall contentedly sit down in this humdrum Pisa, and refer to hope and to chance the pleasure I had expected from your society this winter. What shall I do with your packages, which have now, I believe, all arrived at Guebhard's at Leghorn? Is it not possible that a favourable change in Mrs. Smith's health might produce a corresponding change in your determinations, and would it, or would it not, be premature to forward the packages to your present residence, or to London? I will pay every possible attention to your instructions in this regard.

I had marked down several houses in Florence, and one especially on the Arno, a most lovely place, though they asked rather more than perhaps you would have chosen to pay—yet nothing approaching to an English price.—I do not yet entirely give you up.—Indeed, I should be sorry not to hope that Mrs. Smith's state of health would not soon become such, as to remove your

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principal objection to this delightful climate. I have not, with the exception of three or four days, suffered in the least from the heat this year. Though, it is but fair to confess, that my temperament approaches to that of the salamander.

We expect Lord Byron here in about a fortnight. I have just taken the finest palace in Pisa for him, and his baggage, and his horses, and all his train, are, I believe, already on their way hither. I dare say, you have heard of the life he led at Venice, rivalling the wise Solomon almost, in the number of his concubines. Well, he is now quite reformed, and is leading a most sober and decent life, as cavalier servente to a very pretty Italian woman, who has already arrived at Pisa, with her father and her brother (such are the manners of Italy) as the jackals of the lion. He is occupied in forming a new drama, and, with views which I doubt not will expand as he proceeds, is determined to write a series of plays, in which he will follow the French tragedians and Alfieri, rather than those of England and Spain, and produce something new at least to England. This seems to me the wrong road; but genius like his is destined to lead and not to follow. He will shake off his shackles as he finds they cramp him. I believe he will produce something very great; and that familiarity with the dramatic forms of human nature, will soon enable him to soften down the severe and unharmonizing tints of his "Marino Faliero." I think you know Lord Byron personally, or is it your brother? If the latter, I know that he wished particularly to be introduced to you, and that he will sympathize, in some degree, in the great disappointment which I feel in the change, or, as I yet hope, the prorogation of your plans.

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I am glad you like "Adonais," and, particularly, that you do not think it metaphysical, which I was afraid it was. I was resolved to pay some tribute of sympathy to the unhonoured dead, but I wrote, as usual, with a total ignorance of the effect that I should produce.—I have not yet seen your pastoral drama; if you have a copy, could you favour me with it? It will be six months before I shall receive it from England. I have heard it spoken of with high praise, and I have the greatest curiosity to see it.

The Gisbornes promised to buy me some books in Paris, and I had asked you to be kind enough to advance them what they might want to pay for them. I cannot conceive why they did not execute this little commission for me, as they knew how very much I wished to receive these books by the same conveyance as the filtering-stone. Dare I ask you to do me the favour to buy them? *A complete edition of the works of Calderon*, and the French translation of Kant, a German Faust, and to add the Nympholept?[1]—I am indifferent as to a little more or less expense, so that I may have them immediately, and I will send you an order on Paris for the amount, together with the thirty-two franks you were kind enough to pay for me.

All public attention is now centred on the wonderful revolution in Greece. I dare not, after the events of last winter, hope that slaves can become freemen so cheaply; yet I know one Greek of the highest qualities, both of courage and conduct, the Prince Mavrocordato, and if the rest be like him, all will go well.—The news of this moment is, that the Russian army has orders to advance.

[1] See note at p. 27 of this volume.

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Mrs. S. unites with me in the most heartfelt regret,

And I remain, my dear Smith,

Most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

If you happen to have brought a copy of Clarke's edition of Queen Mab for me, I should like very well to see it.—I really hardly know what this Poem is about. I am afraid it is rather rough.

LETTER LXXXV.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Pisa (or later Leghorn), October 6th, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I wrote yesterday evening in haste to your brother, imagining that you must have set off, and wishing to reassure him on the subject of money.— I write again today, because I find that yesterday was not post day, and I am in hopes that this letter may arrive in time enough.—First of all then,—welcome, and thanks, and take our love and anxious wishes for the companions of your journey.—Secondly, let me advise you upon one or two things.—

You would do well to come by sea instead of crossing France at this season of the year,—and if you do cross France by no means venture to pass the Alps so late, but go directly from Paris to Marseilles, and embark at that town for Leghorn, which is within two hours' drive

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of Pisa. But it would be far better to embark at London[1] for Leghorn direct. At this season, westerly and north-westerly winds may be expected to prevail, and although the usual average passage is three weeks, I know a person who made it in twelve days.—It were of use if you could bring your beds, and by no means neglect to put up your linen, knives and forks, spoons or any other matter of that kind, as it will make a material difference in your expenses here. In case you come by sea bring all the furniture you can,—if you come by France *send* your beds, your piano &c., but not tables, chairs &c.—because freightage is not paid by weight but by room.—Address your packages to the care of Mr. Guebhard, Merchant, Leghorn. In addition—write exactly *when* we are to expect you. This is of the last consequence as to cheapness, because it is necessary we should make some arrangement about your lodgings; and tell us what furniture you have, and whether any.

Lord Byron is expected every day, and I know will be delighted to hear of your coming.—He has a fine palace and will have a splendid establishment here: that's the sort of thing he likes.—Hogg will be inconsolable at your departure. I wish you could bring him with you—he will say that I am like Lucifer who has seduced the third part of the starry flock.

If the letter arrives in time pray bring me a perfect copy of the Indicator and a copy of Clarke's Queen Mab.—I have little hopes that this letter will reach you.

All good spirits be your guide.

Your most affectionate

S.

[1] In the original *or Plymouth* is here struck out.

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LETTER LXXXVI.

To JOHN GISBORNE.

Pisa, October 22, 1821.

MY DEAR GISBORNE,

At length the post brings a welcome letter from you, and I am pleased to be assured of your health and safe arrival. I expect with interest and anxiety the intelligence of your progress in England, and how far the advantages there, compensate the loss of Italy. I hear from Hunt that he is determined on emigration, and if I thought the letter would arrive in time, I should beg you to suggest some advice to him. But you ought to be incapable of forgiving me the fact of depriving England of what it must lose when Hunt departs.

Did I tell you that Lord Byron comes to settle at Pisa, and that he has a plan of writing a periodical work in conjunction with Hunt? His house, Madame Felichi's, is already taken and fitted up for him, and he has been expected every day these six weeks. La Guiccioli, who awaits him impatiently, is a very pretty, sentimental, innocent Italian, who has sacrificed an immense fortune for the sake of Lord Byron, and who, if I know anything of my friend, of her and of human nature, will hereafter have plenty of leisure and opportunity to repent her rashness. Lord Byron is, however, quite cured of his gross habits, as far as habits; the perverse ideas on which they were formed, are not yet eradicated.

We have furnished a house at Pisa, and mean to make

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it our head-quarters. I shall get all my books out, and entrench myself like a spider in a web. If you can assist Peacock in sending them to Leghorn, you would do me an especial favour; but do not buy me Calderon, Faust, or Kant, as Horace Smith promises to send them me from Paris, where I suppose you had not time to procure them. Any other books, you or Henry think would accord with my design, Ollier will furnish you with.

I should like very much to hear what is said of my Adonais, and you would oblige me by cutting out, or making Ollier cut out, any respectable criticism on it, and sending it me; you know I do not mind a crown or two in postage. The Epipsychidion is a mystery; as to real flesh and blood, you know that I do not deal in those articles; you might as well go to a gin-shop for a leg of mutton, as expect anything human or earthly from me. I desired Ollier not to circulate this piece except to the συνετοί, and even they, it seems, are inclined to approximate me to the circle of a servant girl and her sweetheart. But I intend to write a Symposium of my own to set all this right.

I am just finishing a dramatic poem, called Hellas, upon the contest now raging in Greece—a sort of imitation of the Persæ of Æschylus, full of lyrical poetry. I try to be what I might have been, but am not successful. I find that (I dare say I shall quote wrong,)—

> "Den herrlichsten, den sich der Geist emprängt
> Drängt immer fremd und fremder Stoff sich an."

The Edinburgh Review lies. Godwin's answer to Malthus is victorious and decisive; and that it should not be generally acknowledged as such, is full evidence

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of the influence of successful evil and tyranny. What Godwin is, compared to Plato and Lord Bacon, we well know; but compared with these miserable sciolists, he is a vulture to a worm.

I read the Greek dramatists and Plato for ever. You are right about Antigone; how sublime a picture of a woman! and what think you of the choruses, and especially the lyrical complaints of the godlike victim? and the menaces of Tiresias, and their rapid fulfilment? Some of us have, in a prior existence, been in love with an Antigone, and that makes us find no full content in any mortal tie. As to books, I advise you to live near the British Museum, and read there. I have read, since I saw you, the "Jungfrau von Orleans" of Schiller,—a fine play, if the fifth act did not fall off. Some Greeks, escaped from the defeat in Wallachia, have passed through Pisa to re-embark at Leghorn for the Morea; and the Tuscan Government allowed them, during their stay and passage, three lire each per day and their lodging; that is good. Remember me and Mary most kindly to Mrs. Gisborne and Henry, and believe me,

Yours most affectionately,

P. B. S.

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LETTER LXXXVII.

To JOSEPH SEVERN.

Pisa, Nov. 29th, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

I send you the elegy on poor Keats—and I wish it were better worth your acceptance. You will see, by the preface, that it was written before I could obtain any particular account of his last moments; all that I still know, was communicated to me by a friend who had derived his information from Colonel Finch; I have ventured to express, as I felt, the respect and admiration which *your* conduct towards him demands.

In spite of his transcendent genius, Keats never was, nor ever will be, a popular poet; and the total neglect and obscurity in which the astonishing remnants of his mind still lie, was hardly to be dissipated by a writer, who, however he may differ from Keats in more important qualities, at least resembles him in that accidental one, a want of popularity.

I have little hope, therefore, that the poem I send you will excite any attention, nor do I feel assured that a critical notice of his writings would find a single reader. But for these considerations, it had been my intention to have collected the remnants of his compositions, and to have published them with a Life and Criticism. Has he left any poems or writings of whatsoever kind, and in

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whose possession are they? Perhaps you would oblige me by information on this point.

Many thanks for the picture you promise me: I shall consider it among the most sacred relics of the past.

For my part, I little expected, when I last saw Keats at my friend Leigh Hunt's, that I should survive him.

Should you ever pass through Pisa, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you, and of cultivating an acquaintance into something pleasant, begun under such melancholy auspices.

Accept, my dear sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem, and believe me,

Your most sincere and faithful servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Do you know Leigh Hunt? I expect him and his family *here* every day.

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LETTER LXXXVIII.[1]

To LORD BYRON.

[*Pisa*] *Thursday Morning.* [*December* 13, 1821.]

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I hear this morning that the design, which certainly had been in contemplation, of burning my fellow serpent, has been abandoned, and that he has been condemned to the galleys. Lord Guildford is at Leghorn, and as your courier applied to me to know whether he ought to leave your letter for him or not, I have thought it best since this information to tell him to take it back.

Ever faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] Shelley had heard that a man was to be burnt alive at Lucca for the sacrilegious act of "scattering the eucharistic wafers off the altar." He proposed to rescue the man *vi et armis*, and take him across the Tuscan frontier. Byron does not seem to have been agreeable to this proposal; but was willing to "remonstrate." His Lordship explains that the snake allusion is to a "buffoonery" of his: "Goethe's Mephistofilus," he says (*Letters* &c., 1830, Vol. II, p. 568), "calls the serpent who tempted Eve 'my aunt the renowned snake'; and I always insist that Shelley is nothing but one of her nephews, walking about on the tip of his tail." *Cf.* Essay on the Devil, Vol. II, pp. 405–6.

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LETTER LXXXIX.

To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

Pisa, January (probably 11th), 1822.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

. . . . . I am still at Pisa, where I have at length fitted up some rooms at the top of a lofty palace that overlooks the city and the surrounding region, and have collected books and plants about me, and established myself for some indefinite time, which, if I read the future, will not be short. I wish you to send my books by the very first opportunity, and I expect in them a great augmentation of comfort. Lord Byron is established here, and we are constant companions. No small relief this, after the dreary solitude of the understanding and the imagination in which we past the first years of our expatriation, yoked to all sorts of miseries and discomforts.

Of course you have seen his last volume, and if you before thought him a great poet, what is your opinion now that you have read *Cain!* The *Foscari* and *Sardanapalus* I have not seen; but as they are in the style of his later writings, I doubt not they are very fine. We expect Hunt here every day, and remain in great anxiety on account of the heavy gales which he must have encountered at Christmas.[1] Lord Byron has fitted up the lower apartments of his palace for him, and Hunt will

[1] Mr. Hunt and his family were to have embarked for Italy in September, 1821; but the vessel was delayed till the 16th of November. They were detained three weeks by bad weather at Ramsgate, and were beaten up and down channel till the 22nd of December, when they put in at Dartmouth. Mrs. Hunt being too ill to proceed,

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be agreeably surprised to find a commodious lodging prepared for him after the fatigues and dangers of his passage. I have been long idle, and, as far as writing goes, despondent; but I am now engaged on *Charles the First*, and a devil of a nut it is to crack.

Mary and Clara (who is not with us just at present) are well, and so is our little boy, the image of poor William. We live as usual, tranquilly. I get up, or at least wake early; read and write till two; dine; go to Lord B.'s, and ride, or play billiards, as the weather permits; and sacrifice the evening either to light books or whoever happens to drop in. Our furniture, which is very neat, cost fewer shillings than that at Marlow did pounds sterling; and our windows are full of plants, which turn the sunny winter into spring. My health is better—my cares are lighter; and although nothing will cure the consumption of my purse, yet it drags on a sort of life in death, very like its master, and seems, like Fortunatus's, always empty yet never quite exhausted. You will have seen my *Adonais* and perhaps my *Hellas*, and I think, whatever you may judge of the subject, the composition of the first poem will not wholly displease you. I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called verse, but I have not; and since you give me no encouragement about India[1] I cannot hope to have.

they went to Plymouth, resumed their voyage in another vessel on the 13th of May, 1822, and arrived at Leghorn about the end of June, having been nine months from the time of their engagement with the first vessel in finding their way to Italy. In the present days of railways and steam navigation, this reads like a modern version of the return of Ulysses. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

[1] He had expressed a desire to be employed politically at the court of a native prince, and I had told him that such employment was restricted to the regular service of the East India Company. [PEACOCK'S NOTE.]

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How is your little star, and the heaven which contains the milky way in which it glimmers?

Adieu.—Yours ever most truly,

S.

LETTER XC.

To JOHN GISBORNE.

Pisa, January, 1822.[1]

One thing I rejoice to hear, that your health is better. So is mine; but my mind is like an overworked race-horse put into an hackney coach. What think you of Lord Byron now? Space wondered less at the swift and fair creations of God, when he grew weary of vacancy, than I at this spirit of an angel in the mortal paradise of a decaying body. So I think, let the world envy while it admires, as it may.

We have just got the etchings of *Faust*, the painter is worthy of Goethe. The meeting of him and Margaret is wonderful. It makes all the pulses of my head beat—those of my heart have been quiet long ago. The translations, both these and in *Blackwood*, are miserable. Ask Coleridge if their stupid misintelligence of the deep wisdom

[1] Mr. Garnett, referring to Letter CII, says (*Fortnightly Review* for June, 1878): "Some of the points dwelt upon in this inestimable letter—Byron, Faust, the Williamses—derive additional illustration from another much shorter and slighter one, addressed to the same friend five months previously." Mr. Garnett then gives Letter XC.

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and harmony of the author does not spur him to action.[1] You will have heard of the Hunts, and of all my perplexities about them. The Williamses are well. Mrs. W—— more amiable and beautiful than ever, and a sort of spirit of embodied peace in the midst of our circle of tempests. So much for first impressions!

LETTER XCI.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Pisa, Jan. 25, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I send you by return of post £150, within 30 or 40 of what I had contrived to scrape together. How I am to assemble the constituents of such a sum again I do not at present see; but do not be disheartened,—we will all put our shoulders to the wheel. Let me not speak of my own disappointment, which, great as it is in not seeing you here, is all swallowed up in sympathy with your present situation. Our anxiety during the continuance of the succession of tempests which one morning seemed to rain lightnings into Pisa, and amongst others struck the palace adjoining Lord Byron's, and turned the Arno into a raging sea, was, as you may conceive, excessive, and

[1] In Mrs. Gisborne's MS. journal of her visit with her husband to England in the summer of 1820, she records an interview with Coleridge, at which he said, "He should like to translate the Faust, but he thinks there are parts which could not be endured in English and by the English, and he does not like to attempt it with the necessity of the smallest mutilation." Shelley would almost certainly be aware of this circumstance.

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our first relief was your letter from Ramsgate. Between the interval of that and your letter of December 28, we were in daily expectation of your arrival. Yesterday arrived that dated January 6.

Lord Byron had assigned you a portion of his palace, and Mary and I had occupied ourselves in furnishing it. Everything was already provided except bedding, which could have been got in a moment, and which we thought it possible you might bring with you.[1] We had hired a woman cook of the country for you, who is still with us. Lord B. had kindly insisted upon paying the upholsterer's bill, with that sort of unsuspecting goodness which makes it infinitely difficult to ask him for more. Past circumstances[2] between Lord B. and me render it *impossible* that I should accept any supply from him for my own use, or that I should ask it for yours if the contribution could be supposed in any manner to relieve me, or to do what I could otherwise have done. It is true that I cannot, but how is he to be assured of this?

One thing strikes me as *possible*. I am at present writing the drama of "Charles the First," a play which, if completed according to my present idea, will hold a higher rank than the "Cenci" as a work of art. Would no bookseller give me £150 or £200 for the copyright of this play? You know best how my writings sell, whether at all or not: after they failed of making the sort of impression on men that I expected, I have never

[1] See Shelley's letter to Hunt of the 6th of October, 1821, No. LXXXV, in which among other practical hints he had suggested that Hunt should bring all that kind of thing with him from England.

[2] Mr. Garnett remarks (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 187) that "these circumstances were not of a pecuniary nature." There was in fact so grave a breach between the two poets that, in a letter in my possession, Shelley goes so far as to say that, but for certain considerations, he would quit the country inhabited by Byron and would never enter it again except as his enemy to determine their differences *without words*.

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until now thought it worth while to inquire. The question is now interesting to me, inasmuch as the reputation depending on their sale might induce a bookseller to give me such a sum for this play. Write to Allman, your bookseller, tell him what I tell you of "Charles the First," and do not delay a post. I have a parcel of little poems also, the "Witch of Atlas," and some translations of Homer's Hymns, the copyright of which I must sell. I offered the "Charles the First" to Ollier, and you had better write at the same time to learn his terms. Of course you will not delay a post in this.

The evils of your remaining in England are inconceivably great if you ultimately determine upon Italy; and in the latter case, the best thing you can do is, without waiting for the spring, to set sail with the very first ship you can. Debts, responsibilities, and expenses will enmesh you round about if you delay, and force you back into that circle from which I made a push to draw you. The winter, generally, is not a bad time for sailing, but only that period which you selected, and another when the year approaches to the vernal equinox. You avoided—and if you must still delay, will still avoid—the halcyon days of the Mediterranean. There is no serious danger in a cargo of gunpowder, hundreds of ships navigate these electrical seas with that freight without risk. Marianne would have been benefited, and would still benefit exceedingly, by the Elysian temperature of the Mediterranean.

Poor Marianne! how much I feel for her, and with what anxiety I expect your news of her health! Were it not for the cursed necessity of finding money, all considerations would be swallowed up in the thought of

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her; and I should be delighted to think that she had obtained this interval of repose which now perplexes and annoys me. . . . . .

Pray tell me in answer to this letter, unless you answer it in person, what arrangement you have made about the receipt of a regular income from the profits of the *Examiner*. You ought not to leave England without having the assurance of an independence in this particular; as many difficulties have presented themselves to the plan imagined by Lord Byron, which I depend upon you for getting rid of.[1] And if there is time to write before you set off, pray tell me if Ollier has published "Hellas," and what effect was produced by "Adonais." My faculties are shaken to atoms, and torpid. I can write nothing; and if "Adonais" had no success, and excited no interest, what incentive can I have to write? As to reviews, don't give Gifford, or his associate Hazlitt, a stripe the more for my sake. The man must be enviably happy whom reviews can make miserable. I have neither curiosity, interest, pain, nor pleasure in anything, good or evil, they can say of me. I feel only a slight disgust, and a sort of wonder that they presume to write my name. Send me your satire when it is printed. I began once a satire upon satire, which I meant to be very severe; it

[1] "When he [Byron] consented to join Leigh Hunt and others in writing for the *Liberal*, I think his principal inducement was the belief that John and Leigh Hunt were proprietors of the *Examiner*; so when Leigh Hunt, at Pisa, told him he was no longer connected with that paper, Byron was taken aback, finding that Hunt would be entirely dependent upon the success of their hazardous project, while he would himself be deprived of that on which he had set his heart—the use of a weekly paper in great circulation." (Trelawny, *Recollections*, p. 155.) Mr. Garnett says—"It must be remembered, however, that the *Liberal* was a project of Byron's own—see Shelley's letter of Aug. 26" [p. 235 of this volume].

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was full of *small knives*, in the use of which practice would have soon made me very expert.[1]

[*Postscript by Mrs. Shelley.*]

DEAREST CHILDREN,

I fill up a little empty space of blank paper with many wishes, regrets, and &cs. Stay no longer, I beseech you, in your cloud-environed isle, as cloudy for the soul as for the rest of it. Even friends there are only to be seen through a murky mist, which will not be under the bright sky of dear Italy. My poor Marianne will get well, and you all be light-hearted and happy. Come quickly.

Affectionately yours,

MARY S.

[1] A fragment which seems to be a portion of the satire in question is extant, but has not been published. It is in Sir Percy Shelley's possession.

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LETTER XCII.[1]

To LORD BYRON.

Pisa, February 15th, 1822.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I inclose you a letter from Leigh Hunt, which annoys me on more than one account. You will observe the postscript, and you know me well enough to feel how painful the task is set me in commenting upon it. Hunt had urged me more than once to ask you to lend him this money. My answer consisted in sending him all I could spare, which I have now literally done. Your kindness in fitting up a part of your own house for his accommodation I sensibly felt, and willingly accepted from you on his part, but, believe me, without the slightest intention of imposing, or, if I could help it, allowing to be imposed, any heavier task on your purse. As it has come to this, in spite of my exertions, I will not conceal from you the low ebb of my own money affairs in the present moment, that is, my absolute incapacity of assisting Hunt farther.

I do not think poor Hunt's promise to pay in a given time is worth very much; but mine is less subject to uncertainty, and I should be happy to be responsible for

[1] Leigh Hunt at one time threw some doubt on the authenticity of this letter (see his Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 180); but Mr. Garnett tells us (*Relics*, p. 107) that, on finding among his papers Shelley's letter of the 2nd of March, 1822, Hunt acknowledged to Lady Shelley his mistake as to the letter given above, originally printed in Byron's *Letters* &c.

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any engagement he may have proposed to you. I am so much annoyed by this subject that I hardly know what to write, and much less what to say; and I have need of all your indulgence in judging both my feelings and expressions.

I shall see you by and by.—Believe me,

Yours most faithfully and sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

LETTER XCIII.

To LEIGH HUNT.

Pisa, March 2, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

My last two or three letters have, I fear, given you some uneasiness, or at least inflicted that portion of it which I felt in writing them. The aspect of affairs has somewhat changed since the date of that in which I expressed a repugnance to a continuance of intimacy with Lord Byron, so close as that which now exists; at least, it has changed so far as regards you and the intended journal. He expresses again the greatest eagerness to undertake it, and proceed with it, as well as the greatest confidence in you as his associate. He is for ever dilating upon his impatience of your delay, and his disappointment at your not having already arrived. He renews his expressions of disregard for the opinion of those who advised him against this alliance with you, and I imagine it will be

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no very difficult task to execute that which you have assigned me—to keep him in heart with the project until your arrival. Meanwhile, let my last letters, as far as they regard Lord Byron, be as if they had not been written. Particular circumstances, or rather, I should say, particular dispositions in Lord Byron's character, render the close and exclusive intimacy with him in which I find myself intolerable to me; thus much, my best friend, I will confess and confide to you. No feelings of my own shall injure or interfere with what is now nearest to them—your interest, and I will take care to preserve the little influence I may have over this Proteus in whom such strange extremes are reconciled, until we meet—which we now must, at all events, soon do. . . . .

Lord Byron shewed me your letter to him, which arrived with mine yesterday. How shall I thank you for your generous and delicate defence and explanation of my motives? I fear no misinterpretation from you, and from anyone else I despise and defy it.

So you think I can make nothing of Charles the First. *Tanto peggio.* Indeed, I have written nothing for this last two months: a slight circumstance gave a new train to my ideas, and shattered the fragile edifice when half built. What motives have I to write? I *had* motives, and I thank the God of my own heart they were totally different from those of the other apes of humanity who make mouths in the glass of the time. But what are *those* motives now? The only inspiration of an ordinary kind I could descend to acknowledge would be the earning £100 for you; and that it seems I cannot.

Poor Marianne, how ill she seems to have been! Give my best love to her, and tell her I hope she is better,

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and that I know as soon as she can resolve to set sail, that she will be better. Your rooms are still ready for you at Lord Byron's. I am afraid they will be rather hot in the summer; they were delightful winter rooms. My post [MS. illegible] must be transformed by your delay into a *paulo post futurum*.

Lord Byron begs me to ask you to send the inclosed letter to London in an inclosure, stating when you mean to sail, and in what ship. It is addressed to the wife of his valet Fletcher, who wishes to come out to join him under your protection, and, I need not tell you to promise her safety and comfort. . . . . All happiness attend you, my best friend, and believe that I am watching over your interests with the vigilance of painful affection. Mary will write next post. Adieu.

Yours, S.

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LETTER XCIV.

To EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

[*Pisa*, 22 *or* 23 *March*, 1822.]

MY DEAR T.

Gamba is with me, and we are drawing up a paper demanded of us by the police. Mary tells me that you have an account from Lord Byron of the affair,[1] and we wish to see it before ours is concluded. The man is severely wounded in the side, and his life is supposed to be in danger from the weapon having grazed the liver. It were as well if you could come here, as we shall decide on no statement without you.

Ever yours truly,

SHELLEY.

[1] The affair was a *fracas* with a Dragoon who had rudely ridden against Mr. Taaffe, one of Byron's and Shelley's riding party. See Trelawny's *Recollections*, pp. 112–14, or *Records*, Vol. I, pp. 180–2, and *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 183–6.

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LETTER XCV.

To JOHN GISBORNE.

Pisa, April 10, 1822.

MY DEAR GISBORNE,

I have received Hellas, which is prettily printed, and with fewer mistakes than any poem I ever published. Am I to thank you for the revision of the press? or who acted as midwife to this last of my orphans, introducing it to oblivion, and me to my accustomed failure? May the cause it celebrates be more fortunate than either! Tell me how you like Hellas, and give me your opinion freely. It was written without much care, and in one of those few moments of enthusiasm which now seldom visit me, and which make me pay dear for their visits. I know what to think of Adonais, but what to think of those who confound it with the many bad poems of the day, I know not.

I have been reading over and over again Faust, and always with sensations which no other composition excites. It deepens the gloom and augments the rapidity of ideas, and would therefore seem to me an unfit study for any person who is a prey to the reproaches of memory, and the delusions of an imagination not to be restrained. And yet the pleasure of sympathizing with emotions known only to few, although they derive their sole charm from despair, and the scorn of the narrow good we can attain in our present state, seems more than to ease the pain which belongs to them. Perhaps all discontent with the *less* (to use a Platonic sophism,) sup-

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poses the sense of a just claim to the *greater*, and that we admirers of Faust are on the right road to Paradise. Such a supposition is not more absurd, and is certainly less demoniacal than that of Wordsworth, where he says—

> "This earth,
> Which is the world of all of us, and where
> *We find our happiness, or not at all.*"

As if, after sixty years' suffering here, we were to be roasted alive for sixty million more in hell, or charitably annihilated by a *coup-de-grace* of the bungler who brought us into existence at first!

Have you read Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso?* I find a striking similarity between Faust and this drama, and if I were to acknowledge Coleridge's distinction, should say Goethe was the *greatest* philosopher, and Calderon the *greatest* poet. Cyprian evidently furnished the *germ* of Faust, as Faust may furnish the germ of other poems; although it is as different from it in structure and plan as the acorn from the oak. I have—imagine my presumption—translated several scenes from both, as the basis of a paper for our journal. I am well content with those from Calderon, which in fact gave me very little trouble; but those from Faust—I feel how imperfect a representation, even with all the licence I assume to figure to myself how Goethe would have written in English, my words convey. No one but Coleridge is capable of this work.

We have seen here a translation of some scenes, and indeed the most remarkable ones, accompanying those astonishing etchings which have been published in England from a German master.[1] It is not bad—and faith-

[1] Retsch. See note at p. 284, Vol. IV, Poetical Works.

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ful enough—but how weak! how incompetent to represent Faust! I have only attempted the scenes omitted in this translation, and would send you that of the *Walpurgisnacht*, if I thought Ollier would place the postage to my account. What etchings those are! I am never satiated with looking at them; and, I fear, it is the only sort of translation of which Faust is susceptible. I never perfectly understood the Hartz Mountain scene, until I saw the etching; and then, Margaret in the summer-house with Faust! The artist makes one envy his happiness that he can sketch such things with calmness, which I only dared look upon once, and which made my brain swim round only to touch the leaf on the opposite side of which I knew that it was figured. Whether it is that the artist has surpassed Faust, or that the pencil surpasses language in some subjects, I know not, or that I am more affected by a visible image, but the etching certainly excited me far more than the poem it illustrated. Do you remember the fifty-fourth letter of the first part of the "Nouvelle Héloise?" Goethe, in a subsequent scene, evidently had that letter in his mind, and this etching is an idealism of it. So much for the world of shadows!

What think you of Lord Byron's last volume? In my opinion it contains finer poetry than has appeared in England since the publication of Paradise Regained. Cain is apocalyptic—it is a revelation not before communicated to man. I write nothing but by fits. I have done some of Charles I.; but although the poetry succeeded very well, I cannot seize on the conception of the subject as a whole, and seldom now touch the canvas. You know I don't think much about Reviews, nor of the fame they give, nor that they take away. It is

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absurd in any Review to criticize Adonais, and still more to pretend that the verses are bad. Prometheus was never intended for more than five or six persons.

And how are you getting on? Do your plans still want success? Do you regret Italy? or anything that Italy contains? And in case of an entire failure in your expectations, do you think of returning here? You see the first blow has been made at funded property:—do you intend to confide and invite a second? You would already have saved something per cent., if you had invested your property in Tuscan land. The next best thing would be to invest it in English, and reside upon it. I tremble for the consequences, to you personally, from a prolonged confidence in the funds. Justice, policy, the hopes of the nation and renewed institutions, demand your ruin, and I for one cannot bring myself to desire what is in itself desirable, till you are free. You see how liberal I am of advice; but you know the motives that suggest it. What is Henry about, and how are his prospects? Tell him that some adventurers are engaged upon a steam-boat at Leghorn, to make the *trajet* we projected. I hope he is charitable enough to pray that they may succeed better than we did.

* * * * * *

Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. Gisborne, to whom, as well as to yourself, I consider that this letter is written. How is she, and how are you all in health? And pray tell me, what are your plans of life, and how Henry succeeds, and whether he is married or not? How can I send you such small sums as you may want for postages &c., for I do not mean to tax with my unreasonable letters both your purse and your patience?

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We go this summer to Spezia; but direct as ever to Pisa,—Mrs. —— will forward our letters. If you see anything which you think would particularly interest me, pray make Ollier pay for sending it out by post. Give my best and affectionate regards to H——,[1] to whom I do not write at present, imagining that you will give him a piece of this letter.

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

LETTER XCVI.

To HORATIO SMITH.

Pisa, April 11th, 1822.

My dear Smith,

I have, as yet, received neither the Nympholept, nor his metaphysical companions[2]—*Time, my Lord, has a wallet on his back*, and I suppose he has bagged them by the way. As he has had a good deal of *alms* for *oblivion* out of me, I think he might as well have favoured me this once; I have, indeed, just dropped another mite into his treasury, called *Hellas*, which I know not how to send to you; but I dare say some fury of the Hades of authors will bring one to Paris. It is a poem written on the Greek cause last summer—a sort of lyrical, dramatic, nondescript piece of business.

[1] Probably Hogg.

[2] See p. 240 of this volume.

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You will have heard of a *row* we have had here, which, I dare say, will grow to a serious size before it arrives at Paris. It was, in fact, a trifling piece of business enough, arising from an insult of a drunken dragoon, offered to one of our party, and only serious, because one of Lord B.'s servants wounded the fellow dangerously with a pitchfork. He is now, however, recovering, and the echo of the affair will be heard long after the original report has ceased.

Lord Byron has read me one or two letters of Moore to him,[1] in which Moore speaks with great kindness of me; and, of course, I cannot but feel flattered by the approbation of a man, my inferiority to whom I am proud to acknowledge.—Amongst other things, however, Moore, after giving Lord B. much good advice about public opinion, &c., seems to deprecate MY influence over his mind, on the subject of religion, and to attribute the tone assumed in Cain to my suggestions. Moore cautions him against my influence on this particular, with the most friendly zeal; and it is plain that his motive springs from a desire of benefitting Lord B., without degrading me. I think you know Moore. Pray, assure him, that I have not the smallest influence over Lord Byron, in this particular, and if I had, I certainly should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush for the hours of sickness and distress. Cain was *conceived* many years ago, and begun before I saw him last year at Ravenna. How happy should I not be to attribute to

[1] Mrs. Shelley says in a note: "For Mr. Moore's account of this incident, and his own feelings and opinions on the subject—those imputed to him by Shelley being purely conjectural—see Moore's Life of Byron, Vol. II. p. 584, first edition."

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myself, however indirectly, any participation in that immortal work!—I differ with Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world; no man of sense can think it true; and the alliance of the monstrous superstitions of the popular worship with the pure doctrines of the Theism of such men as Moore, turns to the profit of the former, and but makes the latter the fountain of its own pollution. I agree with him that the doctrines of the French, and Material Philosophy are as false as they are pernicious; but still they are better than Christianity, inasmuch as anarchy is better than despotism; for this reason, that the former is for a season, and that the latter is eternal. My admiration of the character, no less than of the genius of Moore, makes me rather wish that he should not have an ill opinion of me.

Where are you this summer?—Forever in Paris? Forever in France? We settle this summer near Spezia; Lord Byron at Leghorn?[1] May I not hope to see you even for a trip, in Italy? How is Mrs. Smith? I hope she finds the air of France propitious to her health and that your little ones are well... Mine grows a fine boy, and is quite well....[2]

I have contrived to get my musical coals at Newcastle itself.—My dear Smith, believe me,

Most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

[1] The note of interrogation, which I have inserted from the original letter, seems to be meant to express a doubt as to the movements of this very uncertain personage.

[2] These points do not indicate any omission, but are in the original letter. This form of punctuation occurs in *Alastor*.

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LETTER XCVII.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(SPEZIA).

[*Lerici, Sunday, April 28th*, 1822.]

Dearest Mary,

I am this moment arrived at Lerici, where I am necessarily detained, waiting the furniture, which left Pisa last night at midnight; and as the sea has been calm, and the wind fair, I may expect them every moment. It would not do to leave affairs here in an *impiccio*, great as is my anxiety to see you.—How are you, my best love, and how have you sustained the trials of your journey? Answer me this question, and how my little babe and Clare are.

Now to business. Is the Magni House taken? if not, pray occupy yourself instantly in finishing this affair, even if you are obliged to go to Sarzana, and send a messenger to me to tell me of your success. I, of course, cannot leave Lerici, to which port the boats (for we were obliged to take two) are directed. But *you* can come over in the same boat that brings this letter, and return in the evening. I hear that Trelawny is still with you.

Tell Clare that as in a few days I must probably return to Pisa, for the affair of the lawsuit, I have brought her box with me, thinking that she might be in want of some of its contents. I ought to say that I do not think that there is accommodation for you all at this inn; and

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that, even if there were, you would be better off at Spezia; but if the Magni House is taken, then there is no possible reason why you should not take a row over in the boat that will bring this—but don't keep the men long.—I am anxious to hear from you on every account and

Ever yours,

S.

LETTER XCVIII.

To EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

Lerici, May 16, 1822.

My dear Trelawny,

The "Don Juan" is arrived, and nothing can exceed the admiration she has excited; for we must suppose the name to have been given her during the equivocation of sex which her godfather suffered in the harem. Williams declares her to be perfect, and I participate in his enthusiasm, inasmuch as would be decent in a landsman. We have been out now several days, although we have sought in vain for an opportunity of trying her against the feluccas or other large craft in the bay; she passes the small ones as a comet might pass the dullest planet of the heavens. When do you expect to be here in the "Bolivar"? If Roberts's £50 grow into a £500, and his ten days into months, I suppose I may expect that I am considerably in your debt, and that you will not be round here until the middle of the summer. I hope that I shall be mistaken in the last of these conclusions; as to

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the former, whatever may be the result, I have little reason and less inclination to complain of my bargain. I wish you could express from me to Roberts, how excessively I am obliged to him for the time and trouble he has expended for my advantage, and which I wish could be as easily repaid as the money which I owe him, and which I wait your orders for remitting.

I have only heard from Lord Byron once, and solely upon that subject. Tita[1] is with me, and I suppose will go with you in the schooner to Leghorn. We are very impatient to see you, and although we cannot hope that you will stay long on your *first* visit, we count upon you for the latter part of the summer, as soon as the novelty of Leghorn is blunted. Mary desires her best regards to you, and unites with me in a sincere wish to renew an intimacy from which we have already experienced so much pleasure.

Believe me, my dear Trelawny,

Your very sincere friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] See the reference to this man at p. 220 of the present volume.

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LETTER XCIX.

To HORATIO SMITH.

[*Lerici, May*, 1822.]

My dear Smith,

It is some time since I have heard from you; are you still at Versailles? Do you still cling to France, and prefer the arts and conveniences of that over-civilized country to the beautiful nature and mighty remains of Italy? As to me, like Anacreon's swallow, I have left my Nile, and have taken up my summer quarters here, in a lonely house close by the sea-side, surrounded by the soft and sublime scenery of the Gulph of Spezia. I do not write; I have lived too long near Lord Byron, and the sun has extinguished the glow-worm; for I cannot hope, with St. John, that "*the light came into the world, and the world knew it not.*"

The object of my present letter is, however, a request, and as it concerns that most odious of all subjects, money, I will put it in the shortest shape—Godwin's law-suit, he tells us, is decided against him; and he is adjudged to pay £900. He writes, of course, to his daughter in the greatest distress: but we have no money except our income, or any means of procuring it. My wife has sent him her novel, which is now finished, the copyright of which will probably bring him 3 or £400—as Ollier offered the former sum for it, but as he required a con-

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siderable delay for the payment, she rejected his offer. Now, what I wish to know is, whether you could with convenience lend me the £400 which you once dedicated to this service, and allow Godwin to have it, under the precautions and stipulations which I formerly annexed to its employment. You could not obviously allow this money to lie idle waiting for this event, without interest. I forgot this part of the business till this instant, and now I reflect that I ought to have assured you of the regular payment of interest, which I omitted to mention, considering it a matter of course.

I can easily imagine that circumstances may have arisen to make this loan inconvenient or impossible[1]—in any case, believe me,

My dear Smith,

Yours very gratefully and faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] See p. 284.

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LETTER C.

To Mrs. GODWIN.

Lerici, May 29, 1822.

DEAR MADAM,

Mrs. Mason[1] has sent me an extract from your last letter to shew to Mary, and I have received that of Mr. Godwin, in which he mentions your having left Skinner Street. In Mary's present state of health and spirits, much caution is requisite with regard to communications which must agitate her in the highest degree, and the object of my present letter is simply to inform you that I have thought right to exercise this caution on the present occasion.

Mary is at present about three months advanced in pregnancy, and the irritability and languor which accompany this state are always distressing and sometimes alarming.[2] I do not know how soon I can permit her to receive such communication, or how soon you and Mr. Godwin would wish they should be conveyed to her, if you could have any idea of the effect. Do not, however, let me be misunderstood. It is not my intention or my wish that the circumstances in which your family is involved should be concealed from her, but that the details should be suspended until they assume a more prosperous character, or at least the letters addressed to her or intended for her perusal on that subject, should

[1] Lady Mountcashel, a regular correspondent of the second Mrs. Godwin.

[2] See p. 279 of this volume.

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not convey a supposition that she could do more than she does, thus exasperating the sympathy which she already feels too intensely, for her father's distress, which she would sacrifice all she possesses to remedy, but the remedy of which is beyond her power. She imagined that her novel[1] might be turned to immediate advantage for him; I am greatly interested in the fate of this production, which appears to me to possess a high degree of merit, and I regret that it is not Mr. Godwin's intention to publish it immediately. I am sure that Mary would be delighted to amend anything that her father thought imperfect in it, though I confess that if his objections relate to the character of Beatrice, I shall lament the deference which would be shewn by the sacrifice of any portion of it to feelings and ideas which are but for a day. I wish Mr. Godwin would write to her on that subject, and he might advert to the letter, for it is only the last one which I have suppressed, or not, as he thought proper.

I have written to Mr. Smith to solicit the loan of £400, which, if I can obtain it in that manner, is very much at Mr. Godwin's service. The views which I now entertain of my affairs forbid me to enter into any further reversionary transactions, nor do I think Mr. Godwin would be a gainer by the contrary determination, as it would be next to impossible to effect any such bargain at this distance. Nor could I burthen my income, which is barely sufficient to meet its various claims, and the system of life in which it seems necessary that I should live.

We hear you have Jane's[2] news from Mrs. Mason.

[1] *Valperga.*

[2] Claire Clairmont, Mrs. Godwin's daughter by her former marriage.

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Since the late melancholy event[1] she has become far more tranquil, nor should I have anything to desire with regard to her, did not the uncertainty of my own life and prospects render it prudent for her to attempt to establish some sort of independence as a security against an event which would deprive her of that which she at present enjoys. She is well in health, and usually resides in Florence, where she has formed a little society for herself among the Italians, with whom she is a great favourite. She was here for a week or two, and though she has now returned to Florence, we expect her soon to visit us for the summer months. In the winter, unless some of her various plans succeed, for she may be called *la fille aux mille projêts*, she will return to Florence.

Mr. Godwin may depend on receiving immediate notice of the result of my application to Mr. Smith. I hope to hear soon an account of your situation and prospects, and remain, dear Madam,

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[1] The death of Allegra.

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LETTER CI.

To EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

Lerici, June 18, 1822.

MY DEAR TRELAWNY,

I have written to Guebhard, to pay you 154 Tuscan crowns, the amount of the balance against me according to Roberts's calculation, which I keep for your satisfaction, deducting sixty, which I paid the aubergiste at Pisa, in all 214. We saw you about eight miles in the offing this morning; but the abatement of the breeze leaves us little hope that you can have made Leghorn this evening. Pray write us a full, true, and particular account of your proceedings, &c.—how Lord Byron likes the vessel; what are your arrangements and intentions for the summer; and when we may expect to see you or him in this region again; and especially whether there is any news of Hunt.

Roberts and Williams are very busy in refitting the "Don Juan"; they seem determined that she shall enter Leghorn in style. I am no great judge of these matters; but am excessively obliged to the former, and delighted that the latter should find amusement, like the sparrow, in educating the cuckoo's young.

You, of course, enter into society at Leghorn: should you meet with any scientific person, capable of preparing the *Prussic Acid, or essential oil of bitter almonds*, I should regard it as a great kindness if you could procure me a small quantity. It requires the greatest caution in preparation, and ought to be highly concentrated; I would give any

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price for this medicine; you remember we talked of it the other night, and we both expressed a wish to possess it; my wish was serious, and sprung from the desire of avoiding needless suffering. I need not tell you I have no intention of suicide at present, but I confess it would be a comfort to me to hold in my possession that golden key to the chamber of perpetual rest. *The Prussic Acid* is used in medicine in infinitely minute doses; but that preparation is weak, and has not the concentration necessary to medicine all ills infallibly. A single drop, even less, is a dose, and it acts by paralysis.

I am curious to hear of this publication about Lord Byron and the Pisa circle.[1] I hope it will not annoy him, as to me I am supremely indifferent. If you have not shewn the letter I sent you, don't, until Hunt's arrival, when we shall certainly meet.

Your very sincere friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Mary is better, though still excessively weak.

[1] The publication referred to is probably an anonymous octavo volume issued by Colburn and Co. in 1822, with a dedication to William Gifford dated the 1st of May in that year. The title is *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Right Honourable Lord Byron, with Anecdotes of some of his Contemporaries.* The references to Shelley are at p. 410 *et seq.* It is not a valuable or creditable book.

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LETTER CII.

To JOHN GISBORNE.

Lerici, June 18, 1822.

In my doubt as to which of your most interesting letters I shall answer, I quash the business one for the present, as the only part of it that requires an answer requires also maturer consideration. In the first place I send you money for postage, as I intend to indulge myself in plenty of paper and no crossings. Mary will write soon; at present she suffers greatly from excess of weakness, produced by a severe miscarriage, from which she is now slowly recovering. Her situation for some hours was alarming, and as she was totally destitute of medical assistance I took the most decisive resolutions, and by dint of making her sit in ice, I succeeded in checking the hemorrhage and the fainting fits, so that when the physician arrived all danger was over, and he had nothing to do but to applaud me for my boldness. She is now doing well, and the sea-baths will soon restore her. I have written to Ollier to send his account to you. The "Adonais" I wished to have had a fair chance, both because it is a favourite with me and on account of the memory of Keats, who was a poet of great genius, let the classic party say what it will. "Hellas" too I liked on account of the subject—one always finds some reason or other for liking one's own composition. The "Epipsychidion" I cannot look at; the person whom it celebrates was a cloud instead of a Juno; and poor Ixion starts

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from the centaur that was the offspring of his own embrace. If you are curious, however, to hear what I am and have been, it will tell you something thereof. It is an idealized history of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal.

Hunt is not yet arrived, but I expect him every day. I shall see little of Lord Byron, nor shall I permit Hunt to form the intermediate link between him and me. I detest all society—almost all, at least—and Lord Byron is the nucleus of all that is hateful and tiresome in it. He will be half mad to hear of these memoirs.[1] As to me, you know my supreme indifference to such affairs, except that I must confess I am sometimes amused by the ridiculous mistakes of these writers. Tell me a little what they say of me besides my being an atheist. One thing I regret in it, I dread lest it should injure Hunt's prospects in the establishment of the journal, for Lord Byron is so mentally capricious that the least impulse drives him from his anchorage. . . . . The Williamses are now on a visit to us, and they are people who are very pleasing to me. But words are not the instruments of our intercourse. I like Jane more and more, and I find Williams the most amiable of companions. She has a taste for music, and an elegance of form and motions that compensate in some degree for the lack of literary refinement. You know my gross ideas of music, and will forgive me when I say that I listen the whole evening on our terrace to the simple

[1] See footnote at p. 278.

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melodies with excessive delight. I have a boat here. It cost me £80, and reduced me to some difficulty in point of money. However, it is swift and beautiful, and appears quite a vessel. Williams is captain, and, we drive along this delightful bay in the evening wind under the summer moon until earth appears another world. Jane brings her guitar, and if the past and the future could be obliterated, the present would content me so well that I could say with Faust to the passing moment, "Remain thou, thou art so beautiful." Claire is with us, and the death of her child seems to have restored her to tranquillity. Her character is somewhat altered. She is vivacious and talkative; and though she teases me sometimes, I like her. . . . . Lord Byron, who is at Leghorn, has fitted up a splendid vessel, a small schooner on the American model, and Trelawny is to be captain. How long the fiery spirit of our pirate will accommodate itself to the caprice of the poet remains to be seen. . . .

I write little now. It is impossible to compose except under the strong excitement of an assurance of finding sympathy in what you write. Imagine Demosthenes reciting a Philippic to the waves of the Atlantic. Lord Byron is in this respect fortunate. He touched the chord to which a million hearts responded, and the coarse music which he produced to please them, disciplined him to the perfection to which he now approaches. I do not go on with Charles the First. I feel too little certainty of the future, and too little satisfaction with regard to the past to undertake any subject seriously and deeply. I stand, as it were, upon a precipice, which I have ascended with great, and cannot descend without greater peril, and I am content if the heaven above me is calm for the passing moment.

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You don't tell me what you think of "Cain." You send me the opinion of the populace, which you know I do not esteem. I have read several more of the plays of Calderon. *Los Dos Amantes del Cielo* is the finest, if I except one scene in the *Devocion de la Cruz*. I read Greek, and think about writing.

I do not think much of —— not admiring Metastasio; the *nil admirari*, however justly applied, seems to me a bad sign in a young person. I had rather a pupil of mine had conceived a frantic passion for Marini himself, than that she had found out the critical defects of the most deficient author. When she becomes of her own accord full of genuine admiration for the finest scene in the *Purgatorio*, or the opening of the *Paradiso*, or some other neglected piece of excellence, hope great things. Adieu, I must not exceed the limits of my paper, however little scrupulous I seem about those of your patience.

P. B. S.

I waited three days to get this pen mended, and at last was obliged to write.

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LETTER CIII.

To LEIGH HUNT

(GENOA).

Lerici, June 19, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I write to you on the chance that you may not have left Genoa before my letter can reach you. Your letter was sent to Pisa, and thence forwarded here, or I should probably have ventured to meet you at Genoa; but the chances are now so much diminished of finding you, that I will not run the risk of the delay of seeing you that would be caused by our missing each other on the way. I shall therefore set off for Leghorn the moment I hear you have sailed ——. We now inhabit a white house, with arches, near the town of Lerici, in the gulf of Spezia. The Williamses are with us. Williams is one of the best fellows in the world; and Jane his wife a most delightful person, whom we all agree is the exact antitype of the lady I described in "The Sensitive Plant," though this must have been *a pure anticipated cognition*, as it was written a year before I knew her. I wish you need not pass Lerici, which I fear you will do; cast your eye on the white house, and think of us.

A thousand welcomes, my best friend, to this divine country; high mountains and seas no longer divide those whose affections are united. We have much to think of

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and talk of when we meet at Leghorn; but the final result of our plans will be peace to you, and to me a greater degree of consolation than has been permitted me since we met. My best love to Marianne, whose illness will soon disappear with the causes of it. If any circumstance *should* make you stop at Lerici, imagine the delightful surprise ——. Poor Mary, who sends you a thousand loves, has been seriously ill. She is still too unwell to rise from the sofa, and must take great care of herself for some time, or she would come with us to Leghorn. Lord Byron is in *villeggiatura*, near Leghorn; and you will meet besides with a Mr. Trelawny, a wild but kind-hearted seaman. . . . .

Give me the earliest intelligence of your motions.

LETTER CIV.

To HORATIO SMITH.

Lerici, June 29th, 1822.

MY DEAR SMITH,

I believe I have as much cause to be obliged to you by your refusal, as I should have been by your grant of the request contained in my last letter. I wrote in compliance with my engagement to do so and with some regret, as I have been long firmly persuaded that all the money advanced to Godwin so long as he stands engaged in business is absolutely thrown away. Your advice to him is excellent, and although I do not think that he will follow it of his own choice, there is every probability that

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circumstances will compel him to submit to some such measures as you recommend: and I have absolutely no funds to prevent that necessity, nor the most remote intention of anticipating further upon a patrimony already too much diminished.

Pray thank Moore for his obliging message. I wish I could as easily convey my sense of his genius and character. I should have written to him on the subject of my late letter, but that I doubted how far I was justified in doing so; although, indeed, Lord Byron made no secret of his communication to me. It seems to me that things have now arrived at such a crisis as requires every man plainly to utter his sentiments on the inefficacy of the existing religious, no less than political systems, for restraining and guiding mankind. Let us see the truth, whatever that may be. The destiny of man can scarcely be so degraded, that he was born only to die; and if such should be the case, delusions, especially the gross and preposterous ones of the existing religion, can scarcely be supposed to exalt it. If every man said what he thought, it could not subsist a day. But all, more or less, subdue themselves to the element that surrounds them, and contribute to the evils they lament by the hypocrisy that springs from them.

England appears to be in a desperate condition, Ireland still worse; and no class of those who subsist on the public labour will be persuaded that *their* claims on it must be diminished. But the government must content itself with less in taxes, the landholder must submit to receive less rent, and the fundholder a diminished interest, or they will all get nothing or something worse than nothing. I once thought to study these affairs, and write or act in them. I am glad that my good genius

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said, *refrain.* I see little public virtue, and I foresee that the contest will be one of blood and gold, two elements which however much to my taste in my pockets and my veins, I have an objection to out of them.

Lord Byron continues at Leghorn, and has just received from Genoa a most beautiful little yacht, which he caused to be built there. He has written two new cantos of Don Juan, but I have not seen them. I have just received a letter from Hunt, who has arrived at Genoa. As soon as I hear that he has sailed, I shall weigh anchor in my little schooner, and give him chase to Leghorn, when I must occupy myself in some arrangements for him with Lord Byron. Between ourselves, I greatly fear that this alliance will not succeed; for I, who could never have been regarded as more than the link of the two thunderbolts, cannot now consent to be even that; and how long the alliance between the wren and the eagle may continue, I will not prophecy. Pray do not hint my doubts on the subject to any one, as they might do harm to Hunt; and they *may* be groundless.

I still inhabit this divine bay, reading Spanish dramas, and sailing and listening to the most inchanting music. We have some friends on a visit to us, and my only regret is that the summer must ever pass, or that Mary has not the same predilection for this place that I have, which would induce me never to shift my quarters.

Farewell.—Believe me ever your

obliged and affectionate friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

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LETTER CV.

To Mrs. WILLIAMS

(casa magni).

Pisa, July 4, 1822.

You will probably see Williams before I can disentangle myself from the affairs with which I am now surrounded. I return to Leghorn tonight, and shall urge him to sail with the first fair wind, without expecting me. I have thus the pleasure of contributing to your happiness when deprived of every other, and of leaving you no other subject of regret, but the absence of one scarcely worth regretting. I fear you are solitary and melancholy at Villa Magni, and, in the intervals of the greater and more serious distress in which I am compelled to sympathize here, I figure to myself the countenance which has been the source of such consolation to me, shadowed by a veil of sorrow.—

How soon those hours past, and how slowly they return, to pass so soon again, and perhaps for ever, in which we have lived together so intimately and happily! —Adieu, my dearest friend.—I only write these lines for the pleasure of tracing what will meet your eyes. Mary will tell you all the news.

S.

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LETTER CVI.

To Mrs. SHELLEY

(CASA MAGNI).

Pisa, July 4, 1822.

My dearest Mary,

I have received both your letters, and shall attend to the instructions they convey. I did not think of buying the Bolivar; Lord B. wishes to sell her, but I imagine would prefer ready money. I have as yet made no inquiries about houses near Pugnano—I have no moment of time to spare from Hunt's affairs; I am detained unwillingly here, and you will probably see Williams in the boat before me,—but that will be decided tomorrow.

Things are in the worst possible situation with respect to poor Hunt. I found Marianne in a desperate state of health, and on our arrival at Pisa sent for Vaccà. He decides that her case is hopeless, and that although it will be lingering, must inevitably end fatally. This decision he thought proper to communicate to Hunt, indicating at the same time, with great judgment and precision, the treatment necessary to be observed for availing himself of the chance of his being deceived. This intelligence has extinguished the last spark of poor Hunt's spirits, low enough before. The children are all well and much improved.

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Lord Byron is at this moment on the point of leaving Tuscany. The Gambas have been exiled, and he declares his intention of following their fortunes. His first idea was to sail to America, which has been changed for Switzerland, then to Genoa, and last to Lucca.—Everybody is in despair, and everything in confusion. Trelawny was on the point of sailing to Genoa for the purpose of transporting the Bolivar overland to the lake of Geneva, and had already whispered in my ear his desire that I should not influence Lord Byron against this terrestrial navigation. He next received *orders* to weigh anchor and set sail for Lerici. He is now without instructions, moody and disappointed. But it is the worst for poor Hunt, unless the present storm should blow over. He places his whole dependence upon this scheme of a journal, for which every arrangement has been made, and arrived with no other remnant of his £400 than a debt of 60 crowns. Lord Byron must of course furnish the requisite funds at present, as I cannot; but he seems inclined to depart without the necessary explanations and arrangements due to such a situation as Hunt's. These, in spite of delicacy, I must procure; he offers him the copyright of the Vision of Judgment for his first number. This offer, if sincere, is *more* than enough to set up the journal, and, if sincere, will set everything right.[1]

How are you, my best Mary? Write especially how is your health, and how your spirits are, and whether

[1] The controversy between Leigh Hunt and Thomas Moore on the subject of this affair became very bitter at last. See Hunt's *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, his *Autobiography* and *Correspondence*, and Byron's *Letters* &c., edited by Moore. See also Mrs. Shelley's Letter with which the present volume concludes. The allusion in the next paragraph, also, receives much elucidation from the opening of the same Letter.

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you are not more reconciled to staying at Lerici, at least during the summer.

You have no idea how I am hurried and occupied; I have not a moment's leisure, but will write by next post.

Ever, dearest Mary,

Yours affectionately,

S.

I have found the translation of the Symposium.

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LETTER TO LEIGH HUNT

ON THE TRIAL OF RICHARD CARLILE

FOR PUBLISHING

PAINE'S AGE OF REASON.[1]

Florence, Nov. 3, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The event of Carlile's trial has filled me with an indignation that will not and ought not to be suppressed.

In the name of all we hope for in human nature what are the people of England about? or rather how long will they and those whose hereditary duty it is to

[1] This is the "letter of five sheets" referred to in Letter XXXVII (p. 138 of this volume). The trial of Carlile for publishing works of Thomas Paine was one of the most important of the "blasphemous libel" prosecutions of the early part of this century. A great deal of information relating to the man himself, and to the circumstances of this and other trials, is given in the early volumes of *The Republican* (a weekly political organ got up by Carlile)—especially in Vol. I (from 27 August, 1819, to 7 January, 1820); and this particular trial was reported in a volume of some forty sheets. Carlile was one of the most intrepid assertors of the liberty of the press and of republican principles. During his incarceration in Dorchester Gaol, upon the iniquitous issue of this iniquitous prosecution, he continued to address the public, the Prince Regent, the judges of the King's Bench, *et. al.*, through the medium of *The Republican*, with the

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lead them endure the enormous outrages of which they are one day made the victim and the next the instrument? Post succeeds post and fresh horrors are ever detailed. First we hear that a troop of the enraged master-manufacturers are let loose with sharpened swords upon their starving dependents, and in spite of the remonstrances of the regular troops that they ride over them and massacre without distinction of sex or age, and cut off women's breasts and dash the heads of infants against the stones. Then comes information that a man has been found guilty of some inexplicable crime, which his prosecutors call blasphemy, one of the features of which, they inform us, is the denying that the massacring of children and the ravishing of women, was done by the immediate command of the author and preserver of all things.

And thus at the same time, we see on one hand men professing to act by the public authority who put in practice the trampling down and murdering an unarmed multitude without distinction of sex or age, and on the other, a tribunal which punishes men for asserting that deeds of the same character, transacted in a distant age and country, were not done by the command of God. If not for this, for what was Mr. Carlile prosecuted? For impugning the Divinity of Jesus Christ? I impugn it.—For denying that the whole mass of ancient Hebrew literature is of divine authority? I deny it.—I hope this is no

daring of an injured but invincible spirit; and, being as he was a man of the people, it is difficult to explain how either he or his *Republican* managed to exist for years under the vile and unscrupulous Government of that day. Shelley's letter was meant for insertion in *The Examiner*. Hunt did not, I believe, publish it; but about 1840, he gave the original document to the late Mr. G. H. Lewes, who, not having printed it in his article in *The Westminster Review* for April 1841, ultimately gave it to Mrs. Shelley; and it is now in Sir Percy Shelley's possession.

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blasphemy, and that I am not to be dragged home by the enmity of our political adversaries to be made a sacrifice to the superstitious fury of the ruling sect. But I am prepared both to do my duty and abide by whatever consequences may be attached to its fulfilment.

It is said that Mr. Carlile has been found guilty by a jury. Juries are frequently in cases of libel illegally and partially constituted, and whenever this can be proved, the party accused has a title to a new trial. A view of the question, so simple that it is in danger of being overlooked from its very obviousness, has presented itself to me, by which, I think, it will clearly appear that this illegal and partial character belonged to the jury which pronounced a verdict of guilty against Mr. Carlile, and that he is entitled to a new trial.

It is the privilege of an Englishman to be tried, not only by a jury, but by a jury of his peers. Who are the peers of any man, and what is the legal import of this word? Let us illustrate the letter by the spirit of the law.

A nobleman has a right to be tried by his peers—a gentleman, a tradesman, a farmer—the like.—The peers of a man are men of the same station, class, denomination with himself. The reason on which this provision is founded, is that the persons called upon to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused, might be so alive to a tender sympathy towards him, through common interest, habits and opinions, as to render it improbable, either that thro' neglect or aversion they would commit injustice towards him, or that they might be incapable of knowing and weighing the merits of the case. Butchers and surgeons are excluded on this ground from juries; it being supposed by the law that they are engaged in

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occupations foreign to that delicate sensibility respecting human life and suffering exacted in those selected as arbiters for inflicting it. From the dictation of this spirit, in all cases where foreigners are criminally accused, the jury impanelled are half Englishmen and half foreigners, and the reason why they are not all foreigners is manifest—not that it is theoretically just that any men not strictly his peers should determine between the accused and the country, but because the practical disadvantage arising from the inexperience of foreigners in this admirable form peculiar to English law would overbalance the advantage of adhering to the shadow, by letting the substance of Justice escape. This therefore is the law and the spirit of the law, of juries, and thus plainly and clearly is it illustrated by the ancient and perpetual practice of the English courts of justice.

Who were Mr. Carlile's peers? Mr. Carlile was a Deist accused of blaspheming the religion of men professing themselves Christians. Who are his peers? Christians? Surely not. Such a proposition is refuted by the very terms of which it is composed. It were to constitute a jury out of the men who are parties to the prosecution—it were to make those who are offended, judges of the cause of him, by whom they profess themselves to have been offended; it were less absurd to impanel the nearest relations of a murdered man to try the guilt or innocence of a person on whom circumstances attach a strong suspicion of the deed. No honest Christian would sit on such a jury except he felt himself thoroughly imbued with the universal toleration preached by the alleged founder of his religion—a state of feeling which we are not warranted by experience to presume to belong except to extraordinary men. He must know he

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could not be impartial. He sees before him the enemy of his God, one already predestined to the tortures of Hell and who by the most specious arguments is seducing everyone around him into the same peril. He probably feels that his own faith is tottering whilst he listens to the prisoner's defence, and that naturally redoubles his indignation.—How is such a person to be considered as the *peer* of the other, if by peer be meant, one who from common habits and interests would be likely to weigh the merits of the cause dispassionately? He is a person of the same sect with him who framed the indictment on which the culprit is accused as a malicious blasphemer. He is evidently less his *peer* with reference to the circumstances of the case than a ploughman would be the peer of a nobleman; and it is less probable that the one would give an unconscientious verdict from envy towards rank than the other from abhorrence for the speculative opinions of the prisoner.—The Christian may be the peer of the Deist, with reference to any matter not involving a question of his guilt in expressing contumelious sentiments concerning the Christian's own belief (for this, if anything, is meant by blasphemy), because he may have those common interests and feelings which make one man alive to render justice to another; but with regard to the matter in question he cannot be his peer, because he is one of the persons whom he is charged as having injured, because what he boasts to consider as his most important interests compel him to judge harshly of the accused and impersonate the [accuser?]. A Quaker's testimony is not indeed admitted in criminal cases, and this disqualification bears with it a sort of appearance of reason. He protests as it were against the jurisdiction of the Court, by refusing to comply with the formality in

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which it has been the established practice of every British citizen to acquiesce. Besides, he not only refuses, but refusing, acknowledges the divine authority of that code on which he is nevertheless unwilling to pledge the truth of his statement. This might be interpreted into the leaving himself a loop-hole thro' which to escape. The pretence might be assumed by those who wished to do evil by a false assertion and yet to escape what they might fear from the vengeance of their God on invocating him as the witness of a deliberate untruth. At least all this is plausible. But the truth is that Jesus Christ forbade in the most express terms the attaching to any one asseveration rather than to any other a sanction to insure its credibility.—This the Quaker knows. The grounds on which the Quaker's testimony is rejected, might be shewn to be futile, at present it seems sufficient to have proved, that the same arguments which have been used to exclude the Quaker from his rights (for all civil powers are rights) as a witness and juryman do not apply to the Deist.

On these grounds I think Mr. Carlile is entitled to make application for a new trial, and I am at a loss to conceive how the judges of the King's Bench can refuse to comply with his demands, unless a few modern precedents, founded on an oversight now corrected, are to overturn the very foundations of the law of which they have been perversions. One point of consideration which was pleaded by Mr. Carlile on his defence, cannot be too distinctly understood. The same justice ought to be dispensed to all. Of two murderers, one ought not to be hung, whilst the other having committed the same crime with the same evidence notoriously existing against him, is allowed to walk about at liberty.—Of two perjurers,

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one ought not to be pilloried and the other sent on embassies. Nor are they for these real and not conventional crimes. But is Mr. Carlile the only Deist? and Mr. Paine the only deistical writer that these heavy penalties are called down on the person of the one, and these furious execrations darted from an indictment upon the works of the other? What! Was Hume not a Deist? Has not Gibbon, without whose work no library is complete, assailed Christianity with most subtle reasoning, turned it into a bye-word and a joke? Has not Sir William Drummond, the most acute metaphysical critic of the age, a man of profound learning, high employments in the state, and unblemished integrity of character, controverted Christianity in a manner no less undisguised and bold than Mr. Paine? If Mr. Godwin in his Political Justice and his Enquirer has abstained from entering into a detailed argument against it, has he not treated it as an exploded superstition to which, in the present state of knowledge, it was unworthy of his high character as a moral philosopher, to advert? Has not Mr. Burdon, a gentleman of great fortune, published a book called "Materials for Thinking" in which he plainly avows his disbelief in the divine authority of the Bible? Is not Mr. Bentham a Deist? What men of any rank in society from their talents are not Deists whose understandings have been unbiassed by the allurements of worldly interest? Which of our great literary characters not receiving emolument from the advocating a system of religion inseparably connected with the source of that emolument is not a Deist? Even some of those very men who are the loudest to condemn and malign others for rejecting Christianity, I *know to be Deists.* But that I disdain to violate the sanctity of private intercourse for

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good, as others have done for evil, I would state names. —Those already cited, who have publicly professed themselves Deists, are the names of persons of splendid genius, wealth and rank, and exercising a great influence thro' their example and their reasoning faculties upon the conduct and opinions of their contemporaries. But who is Mr. Carlile? A bookseller, I imagine, of small means who with the innocent design of maintaining his wife and children took advantage of the repeal of the acts against impugning the Divinity of Jesus Christ to publish some books the main object of which was to impugn that notion and destroy the authorities on which it is founded. The chief of these works is the Age of Reason, a production of the celebrated Paine, which the prosecutors were so far unfortunate in selecting, whatever may be its defects as a piece of argument, inasmuch as it was written by that great and good man under circumstances in which only great and good men are ever found; at the bottom of a dungeon, under momentary expectation of death for having opposed a tyrant. It has the solemn sincerity, and that is something in an age of hypocrites, of a voice from the bed of death.—

Why not brand other works which are more learned and systematically complete than this work of Paine's; why not brand works which have been written not in a solitary dungeon, with no access to any book of reference, but in convenient and well-selected libraries, by a judicial process? Why not indict Mr. Bentham or Sir William Drummond? Why crush a starving bookseller and anathematize a work, which though perhaps perfect enough for its purpose must from the very circumstances of its composition be imperfect? Surely, if the tyrants could find any individual of the higher classes of talent

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and rank, devoted to the cause of liberty against whom from any peculiar combination of accidents they could excite the superstitions of the people, no doubt they would trample upon him to their hearts' content, especially if circumstances permitted them to trample and to outrage in secret. Tyrants after all are only a kind of demagogues. They must flatter the Great Beast. But in the case of attacking any of the aristocratical[1] Deists the risk of defeat would be great and the chances of success, small. And the prosecutors care little for religion or care for it only as it is the mask and the garment by which they are invested with the symbols of worldly power. In persecuting Carlile they have used the superstition of the jury as their instrument in crushing a political enemy or rather they strike in his person at all their political enemies.—They know that the Established Church is based upon the belief in certain events of a supernatural character having occurred in Judæa eighteen centuries ago; that but for this belief the farmer would refuse to pay the tenth of the produce of his labours to maintain its members in idleness; that this class of persons, if not maintained in idleness would have something else to do than to divert the attention of the people from obtaining a Reform in their oppressive Government, and that consequently the government would be reformed, and that the people would receive a just price for their labour, a consummation incompatible with the luxurious idleness in which their rulers esteem it their interest to live.—Economy, retrenchment, the disbanding of the standing army, the gradual abolition of

[1] The word is not used in a bad sense; nor is the word "aristocracy" susceptible of an ill signification.—Oligarchy is the term for the tyrannical monopoly of the few. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

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the national debt by some just yet speedy and effectual system, and such a reform in the representation as by admitting the constitutional presence of the people in the state may prevent the recurrence of evils which now present us with the alternative of despotism or revolution, are the objects at which the jury unconsciously struck when from a sentiment of religious intolerance they delivered a verdict of guilty against Mr. Carlile.

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APPENDIX TO LETTERS FROM ITALY.

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APPENDIX.

I.

Letter from Mrs. Gisborne to Mrs. Shelley.[1]

My dearest Mrs. Shelley,

I began to feel a little uneasy at not hearing from you by Wednesday's post; you may judge, therefore, with how much pleasure I received your friendly lines, informing me of your safe arrival, and good state of health, and that of Mr. Shelley. A little agitation of the nerves is a trifling evil, and was to be expected after such a tremendous journey for you at such a time; yet you could not refrain from two little innocent quizzes, notwithstanding your hand trembling. I confess I dreaded the consequences when I saw the carriage drive off on the rough road. Did you observe that foolish dog Oscar, running by your side, waving his long slender tail? Giuseppe was obliged to catch him up in his arms to stop his course; he continued for several days at dinner-time to howl piteously, and to scratch with all his might at the door of your abandoned house. What a forlorn house. I cannot bear to look at it. My last letter from Mr. Gisborne is

[1] This is the letter referred to at p. 129.

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dated the 4th: he has been seriously indisposed ever since his first attack; he suffers now a return of his cough, which he can only mitigate by taking quantities of opium: I do not expect to see him till the end of the week. You see that he was not the person to undertake a land-journey to England by abominable French diligences. (What says C. to the words *abominable* and *French?*) I think he might have suffered less in a foot-journey, pursued leisurely, *e a suo comodo.* All's well that ends well! Mr. G. gives a shocking account of Marseilles; he seems to think Tuscany a delightful country, compared to what he has seen of France. I remarked, in one of your letters, the account you give of your travelling with a French voiturier, so unlike the obligingness we have always experienced from our Italian vetturini: we have found them ever ready to sacrifice themselves and their horses, sooner than do an uncivil thing, and distressed beyond measure at our determination of going sometimes for miles on foot, though, at the same time, their beasts might scarcely have been able to drag the vehicle without us. This is in favour of the Italians; God knows, there is enough to be said against them.

Now, I will tell you the news of the steam-boat. The contract was drawn and signed the day after your departure; the vessel to be complete, and launched, fit in every respect for the sea, excepting the finishing of the cabin, for 260 sequins. We have every reason to believe that the work will be well executed, and that it is an excellent bargain. Henry and Frankfort go on not only with vigour, but with fury; the lower part of the house is filled with models prepared for casting, forging, &c. We have procured the wood for the frame from the shipbuilder on credit, so that Frankfort can go on with

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his work; but I am sorry to say, that from this time the general progress of the work will be retarded for want of cash. The boilers might now be going on contemporaneously with the casting, but I know that at present there is no remedy for this evil. Every person concerned is making exertions, and is in a state of anxiety to see the quick result of this undertaking. I have advanced about 140 crowns, but prudence prohibits me from going any farther.

Henry will write to Mr. Shelley when the works are in a greater state of forwardness: in the mean time, he sends his best love to his good friends, patron and patroness, and begs his kind remembrance to Miss C.—I remain, with sincere affection for you all,

Ever yours,

M. G.

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II.

Letter from Keats to Shelley.[1]

Hampstead, August 10th, 1820.

My dear Shelley,

I am very much gratified that you, in a foreign country, and with a mind almost overoccupied, should write to me in the strain of the letter beside me. If I do not take advantage of your invitation, it will be prevented by a circumstance I have very much at heart to prophesy. There is no doubt that an English winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering, hateful manner. Therefore, I must either voyage or journey to Italy, as a soldier marches up to a battery. My nerves at present are the worst part of me, yet they feel soothed that, come what extreme may, I shall not be destined to remain in one spot long enough to take a hatred of any four particular bedposts. I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor poem, which I would willingly take the trouble to unwrite, if possible, did I care so much as I have done about reputation. I received a copy of the *Cenci*, as from yourself, from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of—the poetry and dramatic effect, which by many spirits now-a-days is considered the Mammon. A modern work, it is said, must have a purpose, which may be the God. An artist must serve Mammon; he must have "self-concentration"—selfish-

[1] This is the reply to Letter LX.

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ness, perhaps. You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furled for six months together. And is not this extraordinary talk for the writer of *Endymion*, whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards? I am picked up and sorted to a pip. My imagination is a monastery, and I am its monk. I am in expectation of *Prometheus* every day. Could I have my own wish effected, you would have it still in manuscript, or be but now putting an end to the second act. I remember you advising me not to publish my first blights, on Hampstead Heath. I am returning advice upon your hands. Most of the poems in the volume I send you[1] have been written above two years, and would never have been published but for hope of gain; so you see I am inclined enough to take your advice now. I must express once more my deep sense of your kindness, adding my sincere thanks and respects for Mrs. Shelley. In the hope of soon seeing you,

I remain most sincerely yours,

JOHN KEATS.

[1] *Lamia, Isabella*, &c., 1820.

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III.

Account of the Last Days of Keats.[1]

Wednesday, 13th Jan., 1821.

My dearest Friends,

I have this moment received a letter from Mr. Finch, which contains some circumstances relative to Keats. I would not delay communicating them to you, and I hope to be in time for the Procaccino, though it is already half-past twelve. I hope Mr. S. received my long despatch a few days since.

Ever yours,

J. G.

"I hasten to communicate to you what I know about the latter period and closing scene of the pilgrimage of the original poet from whose works, hitherto unseen by me, you have favoured me with such a beautiful quotation. Almost despairing of his case, he left his native shores by sea, in a merchant vessel for Naples, where he arrived, having received no benefit during the passage, and brooding over the most melancholy and mortifying reflections; and nursing a deeply-rooted disgust to life and to the world, owing to having been infamously treated by the very persons whom his generosity had

[1] This is the account referred to in Letter LXXI. See p. 204 of the present volume.

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rescued from want and woe. He journeyed from Naples to Rome, and occupied, at the latter place, lodgings which I had, on former occasions, more than once inhabited. Here he soon took to his bed, from which he never rose more. His passions were always violent, and his sensibility most keen. It is extraordinary that, proportionally as his strength of body declined, these acquired fresh vigour; and his temper at length became so outrageously violent, as to injure himself, and annoy every one around him. He eagerly wished for death. After leaving England, I believe that he seldom courted the muse. He was accompanied by a friend of mine, Mr. Severn, a young painter, who will, I think, one day be the Coryphæus of the English school. He left all, and sacrificed every prospect, to accompany and watch over his friend Keats. For many weeks previous to his death, he would see no one but Mr. Severn, who had almost risked his own life, by unwearied attendance upon his friend, who rendered his situation doubly unpleasant by the violence of his passions exhibited even towards him, so much, that he might be judged insane. His intervals of remorse, too, were poignantly bitter. I believe that Mr. Severn, the heir of what little Keats left behind him at Rome, has only come into possession of very few manuscripts of his friend. You will be pleased with the information that the poetical volume, which was the inseparable companion of Keats, and which he took for his most darling model in composition, was, the Minor Poems of Shakspeare."

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IV.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF EDWARD WILLIAMS, WRITTEN IN 1821 AND 1822.[1]

Went in the summer to Pugnano—passed the first three months in writing a play entitled *The Promise, or a year, a month and a day.* S. tells me if they accept it, he has great hopes of its success before an audience, and his hopes always enliven mine.

Tuesday, October 23.—Jane and myself go to Pisa to look for lodgings for the winter, and looking through a very fine house, the man who was showing it, taking Jane mysteriously aside, said, by way of commendation, "*Si ramment, Signora, che ha la scala segreta.*" A very necessary accommodation for an Italian lady, but not having any temptations for us we could not come to terms.

Friday, October 26.—As a poet Shelley is certainly the most imaginative of the day, and if he applied himself to human affections he would be the greatest. His greatest fault is ignorance of his own worth. He asked me

[1] In the *Essays, Letters* &c., Mrs. Shelley published extracts from this Journal as illustrations to the later letters. Mr. Garnett, in his article in *The Fortnightly Review* for June, 1878, gives a great deal more of the Journal, apparently from a transcript by Mrs. Shelley, for at the end is a note by her on the conclusion of her task of copying. Mr. Garnett describes the Journal as "irregularly kept by Williams during Shelley's residence at Pisa and Lerici." Some parts Mr. Garnett "condensed or omitted" because the substance of their narrative had appeared elsewhere. In the present reprint the two instalments are restored to their connexion. Mr. Garnett's condensations are marked by being enclosed within square brackets.

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yesterday what name he should fix to the drama he is now engaged with. I proposed *Hellas*, which he will adopt. I mention the circumstance, as I was proud at being asked the question, and more so that the name pleased him.

Sunday, November 4.—Lord Byron arrived on Thursday. "His *Cain*," Shelley says, "is second to nothing of the kind."

Monday, November 5.—Shelley read me some passages of his *Hellas*, which are very fine, and his translation of the only Greek farce which has been handed down to us (the Cyclop). In the evening S. introduced me to Lord Byron, on whom we called. So far from his having haughtiness of manners, they are those of the most unaffected and gentlemanly ease, and so far from his being (as is generally imagined) wrapt in melancholy and gloom, he is all sunshine and good humour. On our taking leave, he took up a book from the table, saying, "I will lend you others to-morrow, in the meantime you will find something in the 'Annuaire Historique Universel' to amuse you, besides the general matter it contains, for at the end it takes infinite pains to prove that I am the devil."

Tuesday, November 6.—Commence writing out for S. a fair copy of his *Hellas*.[1] In the evening Lord B. calls with Countess G. and her brother. Told us of a singular accusation against him—that he has gained £500 by writing puffs for Day and Martin's blacking.

Wednesday, November 7.—Call on Lord B. by appointment to practise pistol shooting in his garden, but on application to the governor all firing within the city walls

[1] It was from a MS. in Williams's writing, revised in that of Shelley, that *Hellas* was originally printed. That MS., which is referred to at p. 571 of Vol. IV of the Poetical Works, is now in the possession of Mr. F. Locker.

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is forbidden. He lends me a small pamphlet, now printing, called "Some Observations,"[1] but upon S.'s recommendation does not intend to publish it.

Friday, November 9.—In the evening Shelley reads aloud "The Vision of Judgment."

Saturday, November 10.—Finish the notes and preface to *Hellas*. . . . If such a poem becomes popular, we may flatter ourselves with having advanced a step towards improvement and perfection in all things, moral and political.

Sunday, November 11.—In the evening S. proposes to me to assist him in a continuation of the translation of Spinoza's Theologico-political tract, to which Lord B. has consented to put his name, and to give it greater currency, will write the life of that celebrated Jew to preface the work.

Monday, November 12.—S. and I commence Spinoza, that is to say, I write while he dictates. Write from page 178 to 188.

Tuesday, November 13.—Write fifteen pages. S. talks of printing here.

Wednesday, November 14.—Four and a half pages. Walk with Jane and find Medwin on our arrival at home, who left Geneva on the 23rd.

Sunday, November 18.—S. reads to Medwin his "Essay on Poetry."

Monday, November 19.—Call on Lord B. Have a long argument with him about women, in which S. tells that he *lost ground*. However, experience has not taught him to say much in their favour.

Sunday, November 25.—M. confined with rheumatism, and S. with leeches on his side.

[1] Mr. Garnett says "in reply to ——wles" [with whom Byron was in controversy on the subject of the Life and Writings of Pope].

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Thursday, November 29.—[Anecdote of the Italian who undertook to provide for S. at 10,000 crowns a year.]

Sunday, December 2.—Pistol shooting. Lord B. hit, at the distance of twelve yards, the bull's eye four times, and the half-crown three. The last shot struck the piece of money so exactly in the centre that it was afterwards found with the ball enclosed within it, the sides being drawn to the centre like a three-cornered cocked hat.

Monday, December 3.—S. hits the half-crown.

Wednesday and Thursday, December 12 *and* 13.—[Burning the heretic at Lucca.]

Friday, December 14.—In the evening went to S., who read aloud a poem of Lord B.'s which he had only finished the day before. It is called "Heaven and Earth, a Mystery."

Friday, December 21.—Lord B. told me that he had commenced a tragedy from Miss Lee's German tale (Werner), and had been fagging at it all day.

Sunday, December 30.—S. is thinking of a tragedy to be founded on the story of Timon of Athens, but adapted to modern times. An admirable theme for him.

Wednesday, January 2.—Heard of Polidori's suicide, which was effected by a subtle poison of his own composition. Three things that Byron would do which P. could not do—hit the key-hole with a pistol, swim across the river, and give P. a d—d good thrashing.

Sunday, January 6.—Lord B. asked to subscribe to a flying-machine, to be worked by steam. After a conversation with S., have serious thoughts of taking in hand a steam-yacht to work between Leghorn and Genoa.

Tuesday, January 8.—Mary read to us the two first acts of Lord B.'s *Werner*. . . . S. sat down to Charles I. about

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five days since. It is exceedingly to be regretted that Shelley does not meet with greater encouragement; a mind such as his, powerful as it is, requires *gentle leading*.

Wednesday, January 9.—Dined with Lord B. He told me that during the composition of the "Corsair," he was in a very low state of mind, turning night into day, the sight of which he could not endure. Completed the poem in ten nights, and almost without correcting a line. "The Bride of Abydos" he wrote in three days, but "Lara" cost him longer than any of the others, having been composed on the return from several parties during a very gay season of his life.

Thursday, January 10.—Call on Taaffe, and consult with him about the life of Celestine V. and Boniface VIII., of whom I entertain serious thoughts of composing a tragedy. Read the sketch of it to S., who is much pleased with it, but does not think it would perform.

Friday, January 11.—Sgricci passes the evening here.

Monday, January 14.—Trelawny arrives.

Tuesday, January 15.—Trelawny calls, and brought with him the model of an American schooner, on which it is settled with S. and myself to build a boat 30 feet long, and T. writes to Roberts at Genoa to commence on it directly.

Saturday, January 26.—S. sent us some beautiful but too melancholy lines ("The Serpent is shut out from Paradise," &c.).

Saturday, February 2.—Fine warm day. Jane accompanies Mary and S. to the seashore through the Cascini. They return about 3.[1]

[1] Mr. Garnett notes that this was "The excursion immortalised in Shelley's poem, *The Recollection*." See Poetical Works, Vol. IV, p. 136.

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Tuesday, February 5.—T. wrote definitively to Roberts.

Tuesday, February 12.—Consulted with S. about a new tragedy. T. called and brought with him R.'s drawing of Lord B.'s boat.

Monday, February 18.—Jane unwell. S. turns physician. Called on Lord B., who talks of getting up *Othello.* Laid a wager with S. that Lord B. quits Italy before six months. Jane put on a Hindostanee dress and passed the evening with Mary, who had also the Turkish costume.

Monday, February 25.—My play to be called *Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua.*

Saturday, March 2.—Met S. in his boat, sailed back with him.

Sunday, March 3.—Read part of my first act to S. He found some faults, but generally approved.

Friday, March 8.—Dined with Lord B. During dinner S. repeated some of the finest lines of "Childe Harold," and Lord B., after listening to a stanza, cried, "Heavens! S., what infinite nonsense are you quoting?"

Tuesday, March 12.—[Lord B. promises to write a prologue and epilogue to W.'s play.]

Thursday, March 14.—S. and T. sailed in the boat, and on our return in passing the bridge were hailed by the Custom House officers. Not, however, paying any attention to them, we having frequently passed without interruption, they seized the boat, threaten to imprison our servant, and without our paying 50 livres they declare it shall become their property. S. wrote to the minister of police about it. [Boat ordered to be given up.]

Wednesday, March 20.—Walked with S. along the banks of the Arno. Took our writing materials, and while S. translated Calderon's "Cyprian," I wrote some revisions.

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Saturday, March 23.—[Affair of the dragoon.]

Monday, March 25.—[Report that Taaffe is confined in Lord B.'s house "guarded by bulldogs."]

Tuesday, March 26.—S. comes to breakfast. He received a note from a lady last night, desiring him not to venture near her house after dark, for the friends of the dragoon were on the look out for him, although they did not consider him as most to blame.

Wednesday, March 27.—Taaffe, who during this affair could not be found, and has since talked so greatly of his valour, has been named by Jane "*False Taaffe.*"

Wednesday, April 10.—S. receives his *Hellas.* Trelawny dined and passed the evening. We talked of a play of his singular life, and a plot to give it the air of a romance.[1]

Friday, April 19.—Mary and the Guiccioli examined five hours. C. and T.[2] dined here.

Saturday, April 20.—Called on Lord B.: met Rogers the poet there, an old decrepid man, whose face bespeaks great imbecility of mind, but whose works prove the contrary.

Sunday, April 21.—Call on S. Talk over the subject of the play. He gave me a long lecture on the drama. Put me in bad spirits with myself. C. passed the evening.

Monday, April 22.—My birthday. Forget whether born in 1793 or 1794. T. examined. I interpret.

Tuesday, April 23.—Left Pisa for Spezzia with C. and Jane.

[1] Mr. Garnett connects with this entry the *Fragments of an Unfinished Drama*, "which" he says "seem accordingly to be rather later in date than I had surmised when editing the additions to them in the *Relics of Shelley.*"

[2] Claire and Trelawny, I suppose.

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Thursday, April 25.—Return to Pisa. Meet S., his face bespoke his feelings. C.'s child was dead, and he had the office to break it to her, or rather not to do so; but fearful of the news reaching her ears to remove her instantly from this place.

Friday, April 26.—Mary, C., and Trelawny depart for Spezzia. Poor C. quite unconscious of the burden on her friends' minds.

Saturday, April 27.—Dragoon recovered. Shelley, Jane and I, nurse and children leave for Pietra Santa.

Sunday, April 28.—Fine. Arrive at Lerici at 1 o'clock—the harbour-master called. Not a house to be had. On our telling him we had brought our furniture, his face lengthened considerably, for he informed us that the dogana would amount to £300 English, at least. Dined, and resolved on sending our things back without unlading —in fact, found ourselves in a devil of a mess. S. wrote to Mary, whom we heard was at Spezzia.

Monday, April 29.—Cloudy. Accompanied the harbour-master to the chief of the customs at Spezzia. Found him exceedingly polite, and willing to do all that lay in his power to assist us. He will, therefore, take on himself to allow the furniture to come on shore when the boats arrive, and then consider our house as a sort of depôt, until further leave from the Genoa government. Returned to Lerici somewhat calmed. Heard from Mary at Sarzana, that she had concluded for Casa Magni—but for ourselves no hope.

Wednesday, May 1.—Cloudy, with rain. Came to Casa Magni after breakfast; the Shelleys having contrived to give us rooms. Without them, heaven knows what we should have done. Employed all day putting the things away. All comfortably settled by four.

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Passed the evening in talking over our folly and our troubles.

Thursday, May 2.—Cloudy, with intervals of rain. Went out with Shelley in the boat—fish on the rocks—bad sport. Went in the evening after some wild ducks —saw nothing but sublime scenery, to which the grandeur of a storm greatly contributed.

Friday, May 3.—Fine. The captain of the port despatched a vessel for Shelley's boat. Went to Lerici with S., being obliged to market there; the servant having returned from Sarzana without being able to procure anything.

Saturday, May 4.—Fine. Went fishing with Shelley. No sport. Loitered away the whole day. In the evening tried the rocks again, and had no less than thirty baits taken off by the small fish. Returned late—a heavy swell getting up. I think if there are no tides in the Mediterranean, that there are strong currents, on which the moon, both at the full and at the change, has a very powerful effect; the swell this evening is evidently caused by her influence, for it is quite calm at sea.

Sunday, May 5.—Fine. Kept awake the whole night by a heavy swell, which made a noise on the beach like the discharge of heavy artillery. Tried with Shelley to launch the small flat-bottomed boat through the surf; we succeeded in pushing it through, but shipped a sea on attempting to land. Walk to Lerici along the beach, by a winding path on the mountain's side. Delightful evening—the scenery most sublime.

Monday, May 6.—Fine. Some heavy drops of rain fell to-day, without a cloud being visible. Made a sketch of the western side of the bay. Read a little. Walked with Jane up the mountain.

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After tea walking with Shelley on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the waters, he complained of being unusually nervous, and stopping short, he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared stedfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he were in pain? But he only answered, by saying, "There it is again—there!" He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child, (*the child of a friend who had lately died,*)[1] rise from the sea, and clap its hands as in joy, smiling at him. This was a trance that it required some reasoning and philosophy entirely to awaken him from, so forcibly had the vision operated on his mind. Our conversation, which had been at first rather melancholy, led to this; and my confirming his sensations, by confessing that I had felt the same, gave greater activity to his ever-wandering and lively imagination.

Sunday, May 12.—Cloudy and threatening weather. Wrote during the morning. Mr. Maglian (*harbour-master at Lerici*) called after dinner, and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday, but had been driven back by prevailing bad winds. A Mr. Heslop, and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does, indeed, excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her, and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.

[1] Allegra.

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Monday, May 13.—Rain during night in torrents—a heavy gale of wind from SW. and a surf running heavier than ever; at 4 gale unabated, violent squalls. Walked to Lerici with Shelley and went on board. Called on M. Maglian; and found him anxiously awaiting the moment of a third child's birth. In the evening an electric arch forming in the clouds announces a heavy thunder storm, if the wind lulls. Distant thunder—gale increases—a circle of foam surrounds the bay—dark, rainy, and tempestuous, with flashes of lightning at intervals, which give us no hope of better weather. The learned in these things say, that it generally lasts three days when once it commences as this has done. We all feel as if we were on board ship—and the roaring of the sea brings this idea to us even in our beds.

Tuesday, May 14.—Clear weather, and the breeze greatly moderated, contrary to all the expectations and the prophecies of these would-be sailors—these weather-wise landsmen. While dressing this morning, I saw the boat, under easy sail, bearing on and off land. At 9 we took her down, under top-sails and flying jib, to Spezzia; and, after tacking round some of the craft there, returned to Lerici in an hour and a half—a distance, they say, of four leagues. On our return, we were hailed by a servant of Count S——, a minister of the Emperor of Austria, who sent desiring to have a sail; but before he could get on board, the wind had lulled into a perfect calm, and we only got into the swell, and made him sick.

Wednesday, May 15.—Fine and fresh breeze in puffs from the land. Jane and Mary consent to take a sail. Run down to Porto Venere and beat back at 1 o'clock. The boat sailed like a witch. After the late gale, the

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water is covered with purple nautili, or as the sailors call them, "Portuguese men-of-war." After dinner, Jane accompanied us to the point of the Magra; and the boat beat back in wonderful style.

Saturday, May 18.—Fine fresh breeze. Sailed with Shelley to the outer island, and find that there is another small one beyond, which we have named the Sirens' rock. This name was chosen in consequence of hearing, at the time we were beating to windward to weather it, a sort of murmuring, which, as if by magic, seemed to proceed from all parts of our boat, now on the sea, now here, now there. At length we found that a very small rope (or cord rather) had been fastened to steady the peak when the boat was at anchor, and being drawn extremely tight with the weight of the sail, it vibrated as the wind freshened. Being on the other tack as we approached, it ceased, and again as we stood off it recommenced its song. The Sirens' island was well named; for standing in close to observe it, from a strong current setting towards it, the boat was actually attracted so close, that we had only time to tack, and save ourselves from its alluring voice.

Wednesday, May 22.—Fine, after a threatening night. After breakfast Shelley and I amused ourselves with trying to make a boat of canvas and reeds, as light and as small as possible—she is to be eight and a half feet long, and four and a half broad.

Sunday, May 26.—Cloudy. Rose at six, and went with Shelley and Maglian to Massa. The landing-place, or rather the beach, which is about three miles from the town, affords no kind of shelter, but where there is a continued sea running. A little to the left of the second gun-battery, is a shelf running parallel to the beach, at

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the termination of which five feet water may be had. This shelf is indicated by the shortness and frequency of the surf, and the deep water by a partial cessation of it. It is necessary before any effort is made to work her in —to send a strong sternfast on shore for this purpose, as the current of the Magra sets forcibly to the eastward, and sweeps her suddenly into the surf beyond. We dined at Massa, and left it again at ten minutes past four, with a strong westerly wind straight in our teeth. This wind (the Ponente as it is called) always sends a damp vapour from the sea, which gathers into watery clouds on the mountain tops, and generally sinks with the sun, but strengthens as he declines. To the landing-place it is said to be fifteen miles from Lerici. We left the latter place at a little past eight and arrived at eleven, and returned in seven hours.

Thursday, June 6.—Calm. Left Villa Magni, at five, on our way to Via Reggio. At eight the wind sprung up, baffling in all directions but the right one. At eleven we could steer our course; but at one it fell calm, and left us like a log on the water, but four miles to windward of Massa. We remained there till six; the thunder-clouds gathering on the mountains around, and threatening to burst in squalls; heat excessive. At seven rowed in to Massa beach—but on attempting to land we were opposed by the guard, who told us that the head person of the fort (of two rusty guns) being at Festa, that, as he was not able to read, we must wait till the former arrived. Not willing to put up with such treatment, Shelley told him at his peril to detain us, when the fellow brought down two old muskets, and we prepared our pistols, which he no sooner saw we were determined to use, than he called our servant to the

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beach, and desiring him to hold the paper about a yard from him, he suffered two gentlemen who were bathing near the place to explain who and what we were. Upon this, the fellow's tone changed from presumption to the most cowardly fawning, and we proceeded to Massa unmolested. Slept at Massa, about three miles inland.

Friday, June 7.—Left Massa at half-past five—a dead calm, the atmosphere hot and oppressive. At eight a breeze sprung up, which enabled us to lie up to Magra Point. Beat round the point and reached home at half-past two.

Wednesday, June 12.—Launched the little boat, which answered our wishes and expectations. She is 86 lbs. English weight, and stows easily on board. Sailed in the evening, but were becalmed in the offing, and left there with a long ground swell, which made Jane little better than dead. Hoisted out our little boat and brought her on shore. Her landing attended by the whole village.

Thursday, June 13.—Fine. At nine, saw a vessel between the straits of Porto Venere, like a man-of-war brig. She proved to be the Bolivar, with Roberts and Trelawny on board, who are taking her round to Livorno. On meeting them we were saluted by six guns. Sailed together to try the vessels—in speed no chance with her, but I think we keep as good a wind. She is the most beautiful craft I ever saw, and will do more for her size. She costs Lord Byron £750 clear off and ready for sea, with provisions and conveniences of every kind.

Wednesday, June 19.—Fine. The swell continues, and I am now the more persuaded that the moon in-

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fluences the tides here, particularly the new moon, on the first week before she makes her appearance. Took the ballast out and hauled the boat on the beach. Cleaned and greased her.

Thursday, June 20.—Fine. Shelley hears from Hunt that he is arrived at Genoa: having sailed from England on the 13th May.

Saturday, June 22.—Calm. Heat overpowering, but in the shade refreshed by the sea breeze. At seven launched our boat, with all her ballast in. She floats three inches lighter than before. This difference is caused, I imagine, by her planks having dried while on shore.

Sunday, June 23.—During the night S. sees spirits and alarms the whole house[1] . . . .

Thursday, June 27.—Fine. The heat increases daily, and prayers are offering for rain. At Parma, it is now so excessive that the labourers are forbidden to work in the fields after ten and before five, fearful of an epidemic.

Saturday, June 29.—Shelley's books arrive from Genoa.

Sunday, June 30.—Read some of Shelley's "Queen Mab," an astonishing work. The enthusiasm of his spirit breaks out in some admirable passages in the poetry, and the notes are as subtle and elegant as he could now write.

Monday, July 1.—Calm and clear. Rose at 4 to get the topsails altered. At 12 a fine breeze from the westward tempted us to weigh for Leghorn. At 2 stretched across to Lerici to pick up Roberts; and at half-past found ourselves in the offing, with a side wind. At

[1] Mr. Garnett omits Williams's account of these visions. See Mrs. Shelley's Letter to Mrs. Gisborne, p. 330 of this volume.

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half-past 9 arrived at Leghorn—a run of forty-five to fifty miles in seven hours and a half. Anchored astern the Bolivar, from which we procured cushions and made up for ourselves a bed on board, not being able to get on shore after sunset, on account of the health office being shut at that hour.

Tuesday, July 2.—Fine weather. We heard this morning that the Bolivar was about to sail for Genoa, and that Lord Byron was quitting Tuscany, on account of Count Gamba's family having again been exiled thence. This, on reaching the shore, I found really to be the case; for they had just left the police-office, having there received the order. Met Lord Byron at Dunn's, and took leave of him. Was introduced to Mr. Leigh Hunt, and called on Mrs. Hunt. Shopped and strolled about all day. Met Lieutenant Marsham, of the Rochefort, an old schoolfellow and shipmate.

Wednesday, July 3.—Fine strong sea-breeze.

Thursday, July 4.—Fine. Processions of priests and religiosi have for several days been active in their prayers for rain; but the gods are either angry, or nature is too powerful.

Note by Mrs. Shelley.

So I have finished this task. The later pages cost me all my fortitude, and were wrung letter by letter from my pen in agony.

Dearest Edward; beloved friend; you do not even now forget me I trust. The memory of your gentle voice, expressive countenance, and endearing manners, are a principal part of that which, twisted with every fibre of my frame, is my soul and life far more than the

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dull hours of this new-named year, and vainly returning sun.

V.

Letter from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley to Maria Gisborne: the End.[1]

I said in a letter to Peacock, my dear Mrs. Gisborne, that I would send you some account of the last miserable months of my disastrous life. From day to day I have put this off, but I will now endeavour to fulfil my

[1] In an article which I contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine* for May, 1880, were included this letter and other letters relating to Shelley's life near Spezia, his death, and successive burials. This is the natural epilogue to the *Letters from Italy*, and completes the tragic story in the most admirable manner. It cannot well be overrated, having regard to the light it throws on the home life at San Terenzio. When I published the letter from the original in my possession, Mr. Garnett had already given, in *The Fortnightly Review* for June, 1878, some small portions from a transcript by John Gisborne. This letter gives a more detailed account than has yet been forthcoming of the untimely death of Shelley. It is the leading document in a series of which some are given in the *Shelley Memorials* and some in the *Relics of Shelley*—I mean the series of Mrs. Shelley's letters written during the first year of her widowhood. It is the letter to which Mrs. Shelley refers in one of the 10th of September, 1822, to Mrs. Gisborne (*Shelley Memorials*, pp. 208 *et seq.*). Although a hint of the closing circumstances of the tragedy was given in the preface to the *Posthumous Poems* (1824), this was written almost two years after Shelley's death; and though a comparatively full account was given in Mrs. Shelley's note to the poems of 1822, published in her editions of 1839 and onwards, the present letter far exceeds that note both in vividness of impression and in fulness of detail. There are, however, passages in the note that have no corresponding passages here, as for instance the account of the insane proprietor who rooted up the olive-trees and planted the English forest-trees now forming the beautiful background of Casa Magni, as shewn in the frontispiece to this volume. In the Magazine, the letter was printed *verbatim et literatim*. The only changes now made are very trifling matters of orthography and punctuation.

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design. The scene of my existence is closed and though there be no pleasure in retracing the scenes that have preceded the event which has crushed my hopes, yet there seems to be a necessity in doing so, and I obey the impulse that urges me. I wrote to you either at the end of May or the beginning of June. I described to you the place we were living in;—our desolate house,[1] the beauty yet strangeness[2] of the scenery, and the delight Shelley took in all this—he never was in better health or spirits than during this time. I was not well in body or mind. My nerves were wound up to the utmost irritation, and the sense of misfortune hung over my spirits. No words can tell you how I hated our house and the country about it.[3] Shelley reproached me for this—his health was good and the place was quite after his own heart—what could I answer—that the people were wild and hateful, that though the country was beautiful yet I liked a more *countryfied* place, that there was great difficulty in living—that all our Tuscans would leave us, and that the very

[1] "The house is on the very edge of the sea, and had been a convent of Jesuits. I saw the waves foaming and roaring at the foot, and with an impatience which has seldom gone so far with me, could almost have blasphemously trampled at them, and cried out." *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*, 1862, Vol. I, p. 191.

[2] The exquisitely variegated volcanic rocks certainly import an element of strangeness into the great beauty of that coast.

[3] Shelley, writing to Horace Smith on the 29th of June, 1822, regrets that "Mary has not the same predilection for this place" that he has (p. 286). In his last letter to his wife (p. 289) he asks her whether she is "more reconciled to staying" there; and in her note on the poems of 1822, Mrs. Shelley avows the difference of views in a certain qualified sense: "Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have felt ourselves further from civilization and comfort; but where the sun shines the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury; and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively." The impression of discomfort softened with time.

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jargon of these *Genovese* was disgusting. This was all I had to say, but no words could describe my feelings —the beauty of the woods made me weep and shudder— so vehement was my feeling of dislike that I used to rejoice when the winds and waves permitted me to go out in the boat so that I was not obliged to take my usual walk among tree-shaded paths, alleys of vine festooned trees—all that before I doted on—and that now weighed on me. My only moments of peace were on board that unhappy boat when lying down with my head on his knee I shut my eyes and felt the wind and our swift motion alone. My ill health might account for much of this—bathing in the sea somewhat relieved me—but on the 8th of June (I think it was) I was threatened with a miscarriage, and after a week of great ill health on Sunday the 16th this took place at eight in the morning. I was so ill that for seven hours I lay nearly lifeless—kept from fainting by brandy, vinegar, eau-de-Cologne, &c.—at length ice was brought to our solitude—it came before the doctor, so Claire and Jane were afraid of using it; but Shelley[1] overruled them and by an unsparing application of it I was restored. They all thought, and so did I at one time, that I was about to die. I hardly wish that I had, my own Shelley could never have lived without me, the sense of eternal misfortune would have pressed too heavily upon him, and what would have become of my poor babe? My convalescence was slow and during it a strange occurrence happened to retard it. But first I must describe our

[1] Shelley has been so often accused of drawing upon his imagination for the numerous adventures recounted by him in writing and *vivâ voce*, that any calm statement confirming him in a detail is of peculiar value to the biographer. Compare this account with that which he gives himself (p. 279).

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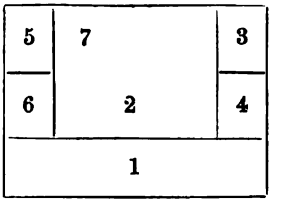
house to you. The floor on which we lived was thus—



1 is a terrace that went the whole length of our house and was precipitous to the sea; 2 the large dining-hall; 3 a private staircase; 4 my bedroom; 5 Mrs. W.'s bedroom; 6 Shelley's; and 7 the entrance from the great staircase.[1] Now to return. As I said Shelley was at first in perfect health but having over fatigued himself one day, and then the fright my illness gave him caused a return of nervous sensations and visions as bad as in his worst times. I think it was the Saturday after[2] my illness, while yet unable to walk I was confined to my bed—in the middle

[1] Trelawny (*Records*, Vol. I, p. 162) says that over the ground floor "there were a large saloon and four bedrooms, and nothing more; there was an out-building for cooking, and a place for the servants to eat and sleep in. The Williamses had one room and Shelley and his wife occupied two more, facing each other." This accuracy speaks volumes for the narrator's memory; and we must presume that, not being in the secret of the private staircase, Trelawny mentally set down that space as a fourth room. As shewn in the woodcut of the house facing the foregoing passage there was no habitable space above the floor in question; but the house has been heightened since then, for there is now another floor with a row of windows looking on the sea. Medwin appears to have visited Casa Magni in August, 1822. He says (*Shelley Papers*, p. 91), after describing the basement: "A dark and somewhat perpendicular staircase now led us to the only floor that remained. It . . . consisted of a saloon with eight doors, and four chambers at the four corners: this, with the exception of a terrace in front, was the whole house. This verandah, which ran the whole length of the villa, was of considerable width. . . ." In repeating this passage in the *Life* (Vol. II, p. 309), Medwin omits the eight seemingly apocryphal doors which had "crept into" his saloon of 1832-3.

[2] Either Mr. Garnett or Mr. Gisborne mistranscribed this word: in *The Fortnightly Review* for June, 1878, p. 864, Mr. Garnett makes it read *the Saturday of*. It is *after* in the letter, the whole of which is so clearly and firmly written that there is not a single doubtful word in it.

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of the night I was awoke by hearing him scream and come rushing into my room; I was sure that he was asleep, and tried to waken him by calling on him, but he continued to scream which inspired me with such a panic that I jumped out of bed and ran across the hall to Mrs. W.'s room where I fell through weakness, though I was so frightened that I got up again immediately—she let me in and Williams went to S. who had been wakened by my getting out of bed—he said that he had not been asleep and that it was a vision that he saw that had frightened him.'—But as he declared that he had not screamed it was certainly a dream and no waking vision —what had frightened him was this—He dreamt that, lying as he did in bed Edward and Jane came in to him, they were in the most horrible condition, their bodies lacerated—their bones starting through their skin, the faces pale yet stained with blood, they could hardly walk, but Edward was the weakest, and Jane was supporting him—Edward said—"Get up Shelley, the sea is flooding the house and it is all coming down." S. got up, he thought, and went to his window[2] that looked on the

[1] See *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 191-2: "One night loud cries were heard issuing from the saloon. The Williamses rushed out of their room in alarm; Mrs. Shelley also endeavoured to reach the spot, but fainted at the door. Entering the saloon, the Williamses found Shelley staring horribly into the air, and evidently in a trance. They waked him, and he related that a figure wrapped in a mantle came to his bedside and beckoned him. He must then have risen in his sleep; for he followed the imaginary figure into the saloon, when it lifted the hood of its mantle, ejaculated, '*Siete sodisfatto?*' and vanished." In Medwin's first version of this story (*Shelley Papers*, pp. 85-6), the essential incident of the ghost being Shelley's "fetch" is not omitted; but the vision of the *Memorials* would seem to derive either from Medwin's *Life* (Vol. II, p. 300), where that incident is dropped, or from the unpublished passage in Williams's Journal. See also Trelawny's *Records* (Vol. I, p. 163).

[2] In the original *to the his window*. I presume *the* was the word meant to come out, and that we were to understand "that window of his room which looked on the terrace," &c. The room No. 6 in the plan (p. 329) has, in fact, a window in the front of the house and one at the side.

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terrace and the sea and thought he saw the sea rushing in. Suddenly his vision changed and he saw the figure of himself strangling me, that had made him rush into my room, yet fearful of frightening me he dared not approach the bed, when my jumping out awoke him, or as he phrased it caused his vision to vanish. All this was frightful enough, and talking it over the next morning he told me that he had had many visions lately—he had seen the figure of himself which met him as he walked on the terrace and said to him—"How long do you mean to be content?"—no very terrific words and certainly not prophetic of what has occurred. But Shelley had often seen these figures when ill; but the strangest thing is that Mrs. W. saw him. Now Jane though a woman of sensibility has not much imagination and is not in the slightest degree nervous—neither in dreams or otherwise. She was standing one day, the day before I was taken ill, at a window that looked on the terrace with Trelawny —it was day—she saw as she thought Shelley pass by the window, as he often was then, without a coat or jacket—he passed again—now as he passed both times the same way—and as from the side towards which he went each time there was no way to get back except past the window again (except over a wall twenty feet from the ground), she was struck at her seeing him pass twice thus and looked out, and seeing him no more she cried—"Good God! can Shelley have leapt from the wall? Where can he be gone?" "Shelley?" said Trelawny—"No Shelley has past—What do you mean?" Trelawny says that she trembled exceedingly when she heard this, and it proved indeed that Shelley had never been on the terrace and was far off at the time she saw him. Well

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we thought more[1] of these things and I slowly got better. Having heard from Hunt that he had sailed from Genoa, on Monday July 1st., S., Edward, and Captain Roberts (the Gent who built our boat) departed in our boat for Leghorn to receive him—I was then just better, had begun to crawl from my bedroom to the terrace, but bad spirits succeeded to ill health, and this departure of Shelley's seemed to add insufferably to my misery. I could not endure that he should go. I called him back two or three times, and told him that if I did not see him soon I would go to Pisa with the child—I cried bitterly when he went away. They went, and Jane, Claire, and I remained alone with the children—I could not walk out, and though I gradually gathered strength it was slowly, and my ill spirits encreased; in my letters to him I entreated him to return—"the feeling that some misfortune would happen," I said, "haunted me": I feared for the child, for the idea of danger connected with him never struck me—when Jane and Claire took their evening walk I used to patrole the terrace, oppressed with wretchedness, yet gazing on the most beautiful scene in the world. This Gulph of Spezia is subdivided into many small bays of which ours was far the most beautiful—the two horns of the bay (so to express myself) were wood-covered promontories crowned with castles—at the foot of these on the furthest was Lerici, on the nearest San[t] Arenzo[2]—Lerici

[1] Whether the word *no* was accidentally omitted is matter for conjecture: probably it was; but certainly, in the letter, we read *thought more*, not *thought no more*.

[2] So in the letter. *Sant Arenzo* is certainly not the name of the place, though it is a little nearer than Medwin's *San Lorenzo* (*Shelley Papers*, p. 89). Mr. MacCarthy (*Shelley's Early Life*) substitutes *San Terenzio* on the authority of an Italian *Guida Pittorica;* and I believe that to be the right name. Friends of mine in Italy, familiar with the place for years, both speak and write the name so: it is so in the official lists of Italian post-

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being above a mile by land from us and San Arenzo about a hundred or two yards—trees covered the hills that enclosed this bay, and their beautiful groups were picturesquely contrasted with the rocks the castle on[1] the town—the sea lay far extended in front, while to the west we saw the promontory and islands which formed one of the extreme boundaries of the Gulph—to see the sun set upon this scene, the stars shine and the moon rise was a sight of wondrous beauty, but to me it added only to my wretchedness—I repeated to myself all that another would have said to console me, and told myself the tale of love, peace, and competence which I enjoyed—but I answered myself by tears—did not my William die? and did I hold my Percy by a firmer tenure?—Yet I thought when he, when my Shelley returns I shall be happy—he will comfort me, if my boy be ill he will restore him and encourage me. I had a letter or two from Shelley mentioning the difficulties he had in establishing the Hunts and that he was unable to fix the time of his return. Thus a week past. On Monday 8th Jane had a letter from Edward, dated Saturday; he said that he waited at Leghorn for S. who was at Pisa,—that S.'s return was certain, "but," he continued, "if he should not come by Monday I will come in a felucca, and you may expect me Tuesday evening at furthest." This was Monday, the fatal Monday, but with us it was stormy all day and we did not at all suppose that they could put to sea.

towns, and in Italian maps, including one on a scale of 1 to 40,000, published in 1878 by the Italian Post Office; but Mr. J. L. Walker (*Notes and Queries*, July 28, 1877) says, on the authority of an "excellent government map" that *S. Terenzo* is the name. Some of these excellent authorities are wrong; but I fear it would be premature to regard the matter as settled.

[1] *Sic;* but *on* was probably meant for *and*.

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At twelve at night we had a thunderstorm, Tuesday it rained all day and was calm—the sky wept on their graves —on Wednesday—the wind was fair from Leghorn, and in the evening several feluccas arrived thence—one brought word that they had sailed Monday, but we did not believe them—Thursday was another day of fair wind, and when twelve at night came and we did not see the tall sails of the little boat double the promontory before us we began to fear, not the truth, but some illness —some disagreeable news for their detention. Jane got so uneasy that she determined to proceed the next day to Leghorn in a boat to see what was the matter— Friday came and with it a heavy sea and bad wind— Jane however resolved to be rowed to Leghorn (since no boat could sail) and busied herself in preparations—I wished her to wait for letters, since Friday was letter day—she would not—but the sea detained her, the swell rose so that no boat would venture out.—At 12 at noon our letters came—there was one from Hunt to Shelley, it said—"pray write to tell us how you got home, for they say that you had bad weather after you sailed Monday, and we are anxious"[1]—the paper fell from me—I trembled all over—Jane read it—"Then it is all over!" she said. "No, my dear Jane," I cried, "it is not all over, but this suspense is dreadful—come with me, we will go to Leghorn, we will post to be swift and learn our fate." We crossed to Lerici, despair in our hearts; they raised our spirits there by telling us that no accident had been heard of and that it must have been known &c.—but still our fear was great—and

[1] The letter is printed in *Relics of Shelley*, p. 113. "Shelley Mio, Pray let us know how you got home the other day with Williams, for I fear you must have been out in the bad weather, and we are anxious," &c.

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without resting we posted to Pisa. It must have been fearful to see us—two poor, wild, aghast creatures—driving (like Matilda) towards the sea to learn if we were to be for ever doomed to misery. I knew that Hunt was at Pisa at Lord Byron's house but I thought that L. B. was at Leghorn. I settled that we should drive to Casa Lanfranchi, that I should get out and ask the fearful question of Hunt, "do you know anything of Shelley?" On entering Pisa the idea of seeing Hunt for the first time for four years under such circumstances, and asking him such a question, was so terrific to me that it was with difficulty that I prevented myself from going into convulsions—my struggles were dreadful—they knocked at the door and some one called out "chi è?"—it was the Guiccioli's maid—L. B. was in Pisa—Hunt was in bed, so I was to see L. B. instead of him. —This was a great relief to me; I staggered up stairs—the Guiccioli came to meet me smiling while I could hardly say—"Where is he—Sapete alcuna cosa di Shelley?"—They knew nothing—he had left Pisa on Sunday—on Monday he had sailed—there had been bad weather Monday afternoon—more they knew not. Both L. B. and the lady have told me since—that on that terrific evening I looked more like a ghost than a woman —light seemed to emanate from my features, my face was very white—I looked like marble.—Alas I had risen almost from a bed of sickness for this journey—I had travelled all day—it was now 12 at night—and we refusing to rest proceeded to Leghorn—not in despair—no, for then we must have died, but with sufficient hope to keep up the agitation of the spirits which was all my life. It was past two in the morning when we arrived —They took us to the wrong inn—neither Trelawny or

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Captain Roberts were there nor did we exactly know where they were so we were obliged to wait until daylight. We threw ourselves drest on our beds and slept a little, but at 6 o'clock we went to one or two inns to ask for one or the other of these gentlemen. We found Roberts at the Globe. He came down to us with a face which seemed to tell us that the worst was true, and here we learned all that had occurred during the week they had been absent from us, and under what circumstances they had departed on their return.——Shelley had past most of the time at Pisa —arranging the affairs of the Hunts—and skrewing L. B.'s mind to the sticking place about the journal. He had found this a difficult task at first but at length he had succeeded to his heart's content with both points. Mrs. Mason said that she saw him in better health and spirits than she had ever known him, when he took leave of her Sunday July 7th, his face burnt by the sun, and his heart light that he had succeeded in rendering the Hunts tolerably comfortable. Edward had remained at Leghorn. On Monday July 8th during the morning they were employed in buying many things—eatables &c. for our solitude. There had been a thunderstorm early but about noon the weather was fine and the wind right fair for Lerici—They were impatient to be gone. Roberts said, stay until to morrow to see if the weather is settled; and S. might have staid but Edward was in so great an anxiety to reach home—saying they would get there in seven hours with that wind—that they sailed! S. being in one of those extravagant fits of good spirits in which you have sometimes seen him. Roberts went out to the end of the mole and watched them out of sight—they sailed at one and went off at the rate of

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about seven knots—about three—Roberts, who was still on the mole—saw wind coming from the Gulph—or rather what the Italians call a temporale. Anxious to know how the boat would weather the storm, he got leave to go up the tower, and with the glass discovered them about ten miles out at sea, off Via Reggio, they were taking in their topsails—"The haze of the storm," he said, "hid them from me and I saw them no more.—When the storm cleared I looked again fancying that I should see them on their return to us—but there was no boat on the sea."[1]—This then was all we knew, yet we did not despair—they might have been driven over to Corsica, and not knowing the coast and gone God knows where. Reports favoured this belief—it was even said that they had been seen in the Gulph—we resolved to return with all possible speed—we sent a courier to go from tower to tower along the coast to know if anything had been seen or found, and at 9 A.M. we quitted Leghorn—stopped but one moment at Pisa and proceeded towards Lerici—When at two miles from Via Reggio we rode down to that town to know if they knew anything—here our calamity first began to break on us—a little boat and a water cask had been found five miles off—they had manufactured a *piccolissimalancia* of thin planks stitched by a shoemaker [2] just to let them run on shore without

[1] "When the cloud passed onward Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished."—NOTES TO POEMS OF 1822.

[2] There are still recollections of this shoemaker's boat at Lerici. In the Note on Poems of 1822 Mrs. Shelley refers to "a boat of canvas and reeds" (mentioned also in Williams's journal, p. 321), built by Shelley and Williams for this purpose. Trelawny (*Records*, Vol. I, p. 152) describes the building of the wicker and canvas boat very circumstantially. There would thus seem to have been two of these skiffs at Lerici,—indeed three unless Medwin was characteristically inaccurate on this point; for he says (*Shelley Papers*, p. 91, and *Life*, Vol. II, p. 309) that a skiff which he saw in the basement of Casa Magni in August, 1822, was the same which his friends had on the Serchio.

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wetting themselves as our boat drew four feet water.—The description of that found tallied with this—but then this boat was very cumbersome, and in bad weather they might have been easily led to throw it overboard—the cask frightened me most—but the same reason might in some sort be given for that. I must tell you that Jane and I were not now alone. Trelawny accompanied us back to our home. We journeyed on and reached the Magra about half past ten P.M. I cannot describe to you what I felt in the first moment when, fording this river, I felt the water splash about our wheels—I was suffocated—I gasped for breath—I thought I should have gone into convulsions, and I struggled violently that Jane might not perceive it—looking down the river I saw the two great lights burning at the *foce*—a voice from within me seemed to cry aloud "that is his grave." After passing the river I gradually recovered. Arriving at Lerici we were obliged to cross our little bay in a boat—San Arenzo was illuminated for a festa—what a scene—the waving sea—the scirocco wind—the lights of the town towards which we rowed—and our own desolate hearts—that coloured all with a shroud—we landed; nothing had been heard of them. This was Saturday July 13, and thus we waited until Thursday July 25th[1] thrown about by hope and fear. We sent messengers along the coast towards Genoa and to Via Reggio—nothing had been found more than the *lancetta;* reports were brought us—we hoped—and yet to tell you all the agony we endured during those twelve days would be to make you

[1] In a letter from Claire to Leigh Hunt, given in *Macmillan's Magazine* for May, 1880, it seems that already on the 14th Roberts had heard that the bodies were "found three miles from Via Reggio." This is curiously circumstantial; but I find no reason for doubting that the 22nd was actually the day on which the bodies were thrown up, as indicated in the *Shelley Memorials*, p. 200.

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conceive a universe of pain—each moment intolerable and giving place to one still worse. The people of the country too added to one's discomfort—they are like wild savages—on festas the men and women and children in different bands—the sexes always separate—pass the whole night in dancing on the sands close to our door, running into the sea, then back again, and screaming all the time one perpetual air—the most detestable in the world—then the scirocco perpetually blew and the sea for ever moaned their dirge. On Thursday 25th Trelawny left us to go to Leghorn to see what was doing or what could be done. On Friday I was very ill, but as evening came on I said to Jane—"If anything had been found on the coast Trelawny would have returned to let us know. He has not returned, so I hope." About 7 o'clock P.M. he did return—all was over—all was quiet now, they had been found washed on shore.—Well all this was to be endured.

Well what more have I to say? The next day we returned to Pisa and here we are still—days pass away —one after another—and we live thus. We are all together — we shall quit Italy together. Jane must proceed to London—if letters do not alter my views I shall remain in Paris.—Thus we live—seeing the Hunts now and then. Poor Hunt has suffered terribly as you may guess. Lord Byron is very kind to me and comes with the Guiccioli to see me often. Today—this day—the sun shining in the sky—they are gone to the desolate sea coast to perform the last offices to their earthly remains,[1] Hunt, L. B. and Trelawny. The quarantine

[1] In a subsequent letter to Mrs. Gisborne (*Shelley Memorials*, p. 209), Mrs. Shelley says, referring to this passage, "I said . . . that on that day (Aug. 15) they had gone to perform the last offices for

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laws would not permit us to remove them sooner—and now only on condition that we burn them to ashes. That I do not dislike.—His rest shall be at Rome beside my child—where one day I also shall join them—Adonais is not Keats's, it is his own elegy—he bids you there go to Rome—I have seen the spot where he now lies—the sticks that mark the spot where the sands cover him—he shall not be there, it is too near Via Reggio—they are now about this fearful office—and I live! One more circumstance I will mention. As I said he took leave of Mrs. Mason in high spirits on Sunday—"Never," said she, "did I see him look happier than the last glance I had of his countenance." On Monday he was lost—on Monday night she dreamt that she was somewhere—she knew not where—and he came looking very pale and fearfully melancholy—she said to him—"You look ill, you are tired, sit down and eat." "No," he replied, "I shall never eat more, I have not a soldo left in the world."—"Nonsense," said she, "this is no inn—you need not pay"—"perhaps," he answered, "it is the worse for that." Then she awoke, and going to sleep again she dreamt that my Percy was dead, and she awoke crying bitterly—so bitterly and felt so miserable—that she said to herself—"why if the little boy should die I should not feel it in this manner." She was so struck with these dreams that she mentioned them to her servant the next day—saying she hoped all was well with us.

Well here is my story—the last story I shall have to

him; however, I erred in this, for on that day those of Edward were alone fulfilled, and they returned on the 16th to celebrate Shelley's." Trelawny (Vol. I, p. 204) says:—"On the 13th of August, 1822, I went on board the *Bolivar*," &c.; and the narrative goes on to shew that Williams was burnt the day after this embarkation, Shelley the day after that. Is "13th" a misprint for "14th"?

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tell—all that might have been bright in my life is now despoiled.—I shall live to improve myself, to take care of my child, and render myself worthy to join him. Soon my weary pilgrimage will begin—I rest now—but soon I must leave Italy—and then—there is an end of all but despair. Adieu. I hope you are well and happy. I have an idea that while he was at Pisa he received a letter from you that I have never seen—so not knowing where to direct I shall send this letter to Peacock—I shall send it open—he may be glad to read it.

Yours ever truly,

MARY W. S.

Pisa, August 15th, 1822.

I shall probably write to you soon again. I have left out a material circumstance—a fishing boat saw them go down.—It was about four in the afternoon—they saw the boy at mast head, when baffling winds struck the sails—they had looked away a moment and looking again the boat was gone—This is their story but there is little doubt that these men might have saved them, at least Edward who could swim. They could not, they said, get near her—but three quarters of an hour after passed over the spot where they had seen her—they protested no wreck of her was visible, but Roberts going on board their boat found several spars belonging to her.[1]—

[1] Trelawny narrates (*Records*, Vol. I, p. 188) how his Genoese mate spied an oar thought to have belonged to the *Don Juan* on board a fishing-boat; but the "several spars *belonging* to her" (not merely *thought* to have belonged to her) discovered by Roberts correspond curiously with Trelawny's letter of the 27th of December, 1875, to *The Times*, except that in that letter it is the Genoese mate who is again referred to: "The Genoese said 'Why, there are some of her spars on board you,' pointing to an English oar, 'that belongs to her.'

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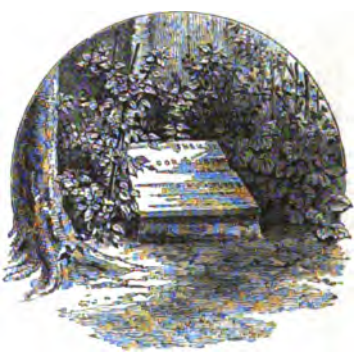
Perhaps they let them perish to obtain these.[1] Trelawny thinks he can get her up, since another fisherman thinks that he has found the spot where she lies, having drifted near shore. T. does this to know perhaps the cause of her wreck—but I care little about it.

This they all denied." Is it possible that Trelawny's memory after fifty-three years failed to discriminate between the Genoese mate's suspicion and Roberts's certainty? It seems hardly likely that Mrs. Shelley's particular record, written at the time, can be inaccurate.

[1] Concerning the theory that the *Don Juan* was run down in a piratical attempt to board her, a great deal has been written for and against. See particularly Trelawny's *Records*, Mr. Garnett's article in *The Fortnightly Review* for June, 1878, and the Memoir prefixed to Mr. Rossetti's 1878 edition of the Poetical Works.



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List shewing the Sources from which the

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have been obtained.[1]

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3. Do.
4. Do.
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6. Do.
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9. Do.
10. Do.
11. Westminster Review.
12. Stockdale's Budget.
13. Stockdale's Budget.
14. Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan.
15. Medwin's Life of Shelley.
16. "The Etonian out of Bounds."
17. Manuscript.
18. Middleton's "Shelley and his Writings."
19. Do.
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21. The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt.

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2. Essays &c.
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*8. Fraser's Magazine.
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*19. Fraser's Magazine.

[1] In many instances these letters have been collated with the originals. An asterisk is set against the numbers of those which have been revised or added to on MS. authority.

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102. Fortnightly Review.
103. Garnett's Relics of Shelley.
*104. Essays &c.
*105. Do.
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GENERAL INDEX.

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[This index is for the whole works of Shelley, poetry as well as prose. The Roman figures indicate the volume, the Arabic figures the page; but, in a few references to prefaces paged in Roman figures, both volume and page are shewn by Roman figures, the higher number being, however, always that of the page. The four volumes of Poetry are indicated by "i," "ii," "iii," and "iv," the four volumes of Prose by "*Pr.* i," "*Pr.* ii," "*Pr.* iii," and "*Pr.* iv." As this is, I believe, the first index ever made to any edition of Shelley, I would gladly have made it wholly myself, had it been practicable for me to undertake the task; but my responsibility is only that of having gone carefully over it and interpolated a few dozens of references and removed a few.—H. B. F.]

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THE END.

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"By Shelley's soul," we cry, "the brightest guest
Of this dull world, sweetest and heavenliest,
Passed homeward when the boat in Spezia's Bay
Went down in sudden blackness,"—struck, men say,
By sea-fiends on a dark and bloody quest!

The greed of gold that like some giant-pest
Stalks through the prostrate world, and sets the best
Beneath its heel, was turned not from its way
By Shelley's soul.

Ah! holy poet who standest now confessed
Higher than the heights of æther that were blessed
By thy swift-travelling spirit,—we who pray
For peace on earth and freedom in our day
Make oath of rights restored and wrongs redressed,
"By Shelley's soul!"

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